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Creme de la

The 12-page supplement for secretaries and PAs

PLUS INTERFAX - YOUR LINK WITH TECHNOLOGY

Massacre by the 'ethnic cleansers'

Feared Serb unit accused by survivors

FROM TOM WALKER IN LIKOSHANI

THE secretive Serb police unit linked with the "ethnic cleansing" that appalled the world after the break-up of Yugoslavia was blamed yesterday for the massacre of Albanians in Kosovo.

As more than 40,000 people gathered in the mountain village of Likoshani to bury their dead, survivors of one attack spoke of black-uniformed police units — a clue that members of the notorious "anti-terrorist" SAJ were involved in the killings.

"The Serbs have been killing, beating and arresting here and across Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia," Zylfije Hurdoci, a psychiatrist in the front ranks of the mourners, said.

Western diplomats, too, believe that the SAJ is active again in Kosovo, where at least 20 people were slaughtered in police raids at the weekend. One said that he believed the unit was being run by a trusted henchman of President Milosevic, who was accused of starting a fresh wave of ethnic cleansing to preserve his power.

Yesterday, as the mourners

came across the parched hills in their thousands, the silent pain and oppression was matched by an anger at a Serb police state that Albanians now refuse to recognise. On this windswept site were born the beginnings of the ethnic struggle that will make or break Europe's last great dictator. And in a land where Albanians outnumber Serbs nine to one, Mr Milosevic may finally have precipitated a war of ethnic hatred that could engulf the whole Balkan region.

In bright sunshine they came, forming a procession across the vast landscape made a cinematographer's dream: hundreds of tractors, each pulling trailers packed by local Albanians, crawling in a single file towards a green hilltop stained black with the funeral throng.

At the top of the hill designated as the funeral site, 21 graves were still being dug as politicians addressed the gathering crowd. Long lines of silent mourners passed the bereaved, shaking hands, their heads bowed. Many of the older men wore suits and their traditional white phetia.

While younger men wore jeans and leather jackets, "I want to kill some Serbs, I want to spill blood," a young Albanian back from Germany said. And already there were reports of reprisal with the shooting of a Serb policeman in the village of Prekoca.

They paid their respects to the victims and vilified the killers, details filtered out of a further massacre: that of nine members of the prosperous Ahmeti family and two of their guests in the village of



An estimated 40,000 ethnic Albanians gathered yesterday for the mass funeral of some of the 20 people killed by Serb police or paramilitaries in Kosovo province.



Likoshani. A jigsaw of evidence seems to point to a brutal cleansing operation in which the men were beaten and later executed.

Their bodies were released from the state morgue in the capital, Pristina, yesterday and driven by grieving relatives along the main road west of the town. At a roadblock at the village of Komorane, however, the Serb police seemed to have second thoughts about the bodies and stopped the cortege. Witnesses say there

was some gunfire, before the Albanians tried taking the bodies through woods towards Likoshani.

Journalists who had avoided the Serb police and navigated the back streets were meanwhile taken to the family compound, which caps the hill opposite the funeral site. Outside the bullet-ridden and twisted metal gates was a stack of brushwood, around which the earth was stained dark by patches of blood. Human teeth and shreds of

scalp completed the grisly spectacle. Inside the compound, the tracks of two armoured personnel carriers led to the house.

Family members described how police units had smashed their way in on Saturday and separated the women from the men, whom they then beat for four hours — with at least two police to every man, according to the widow of the patriarch, Ahmet Ahmeti. The men were then dragged outside and shot.

Other family members then showed where Serb snipers had taken up positions in nearby houses, and pointed out an Orthodox Serb cross scrawled on the wall of the Ahmeti house, with the inscription: "Next time it will be the same" beneath.

Why the family was targeted remains a mystery, although it had business links with Switzerland, from where the Kosovo Liberation Army is probably funded. The psychiatrist Ms Hurdoci said that

many of the family were under sedation after the attack and that the local population in general was numb with fear.

The Ahmeti family's descriptions of police in black uniforms added to suspicions that the SAJ — a 500-strong unit created by Mr Milosevic — was responsible.

The composition of the unit remains a secret, although it is known that many of the troops are part-timers and in the past members have been recruited from among the ranks of

gangs used specifically for cleansing operations throughout the former Yugoslavia.

One diplomat in the area said he believed the SAJ was being run by Frenki Simanovic, one of the most feared members of the state security hierarchy, who has been spotted in Kosovo over the past month. "Look into your eyes and you shiver," a former Serb marine said.

Kosovo powderkeg, page 11
Leading article, page 19

Granada apology over M&S claims

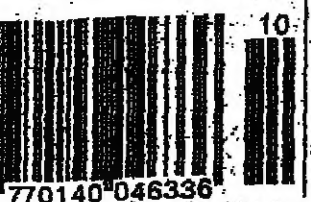
Granada Television has apologised to Marks and Spencer and will pay £50,000 damages and £500,000 costs, over a programme saying that the company exploited child labour. The jury was told to watch the programme and come to a decision without hearing witnesses. Page 5

Defiant Irvine

Lord Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, has insisted that the £650,000 refurbishment of his official residence was a "noble cause" and dismissed any criticism as a "storm in a teacup". Page 9

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Our people screwed up in Patten row, says Murdoch

BY RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

RUPERT MURDOCH expressed regret yesterday that senior executives of the publishers HarperCollins were not forthright about the real reasons for dropping Chris Patten's book on China.

He said: "I did not tell people to try to censor the book or invent excuses not to do it. I said: 'Why don't you go and say we would rather have someone else publish this and if there is any chance of losing money we will make it good.'"

The chairman and chief executive of the News Corporation was speaking for the first time about the damaging row over the decision by HarperCollins, which like The Times, is part of News Corp — not to publish the last

Governor of Hong Kong's book, East and West.

Mr Murdoch said that he had expressed displeasure about the book to HarperCollins executives as long ago as July and told them to say that there were dozens of other publishers who would love to publish the book. "They chickened out and they got themselves into the position where they were inventing reasons in the middle of January why they just didn't want to publish it which were nonsense, leaving me in a completely inexcusable position."

"One of the most damaging aspects of the row has been the fact that Stuart Proffitt, the former senior non-fiction editor at HarperCollins, has

made a statutory declaration saying he was told by senior executives to argue that the book was not good enough. The instruction came after Mr Proffitt — who is now suing for constructive dismissal — had described the manuscript at a dinner for the book trade as the most lucid and intelligent he had received from a politician in 15 years in publishing.

Yesterday Mr Murdoch, speaking from his car on a brief stopover in Britain, said that the executives at HarperCollins had "screwed it up". As a result Mr Proffitt, who was a very good editor, was able to take up the "position of a martyr" and Mr

Tax reprieve hints for Tessa savers

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND POLLY NEWTON

PEOPLE who have ploughed their savings into Peps and Tessas are expected to win a tax reprieve from Gordon Brown in the Budget on March 17.

Fresh hints that the Chancellor is to make important changes to his plans for the new individual savings accounts to avoid people who have saved big sums from being taxed retrospectively came in the Commons yesterday as the Conservatives attacked the proposals in a special debate.

At the same time, well-placed government sources told The Times that Mr Brown's plans would definitely be changed to meet the fears that they were penalising the middle-class voters who sup-

ported the Government last May.

The move would be good news for the estimated 400,000 who have saved more than Mr Brown's £50,000 tax-free limit for the new Isas. There were even hints that the limit could be raised.

Both Alistair Darling, the Treasury Chief Secretary, and Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, told MPs they were unable to give any further details. But after an MP said that people who had used Peps and Tessas to build up a second pension were certain to be penalised Mr Darling seemed to imply that concessions were likely.

Tory bait, page 9
Budget countdown, page 27

Ballroom ceiling crashes the royal party

BY ALAN HAMILTON

URGENT checks were being conducted on the Buckingham Palace ballroom ceiling last night after part of it fell on a man watching his father being invested by the Queen.

Nicholas Howell, 28, required nine stitches to two head wounds at St Thomas's Hospital when a gilded plaster moulding plunged more than 40 ft and struck him on the head and leg, as he sat among 500 other guests at one of the Queen's regular Tuesday investitures. He was allowed home after treatment, his suit still splattered with dust and blood.

Last night the Queen, who was said to be shocked by the incident, issued an invitation

to Mr Howell to attend one of her summer garden parties in an open-air setting well away from ceilings.

Palace officials closed the ballroom as soon as the ceremony was over. Staff said that the ceiling had been inspected only three weeks ago as part of a regular five-yearly maintenance programme, and that no structural faults had been found.

The Palace denied that maintenance work on the palace was being skimped since the Royal Household took over direct responsibility for its own buildings in 1991. The fact that £300,000 was spent on maintaining the palace in 1997 than in the previous year was the result of

better management and financial control, it said.

Mr Howell was seated with other members of his family to see his father Keith, 58, received from the Queen the insignia of his OBE for services to the Office of Fair Trading, where he is head of publicity and marketing.

The hour-long ceremony was almost over, Professor Eric Hobsbawm had been invested as a Companion of Honour, Sir Robin Janvyn, the Queen's deputy private secretary, had received his knighthood and Mr Howell the insignia of his OBE. The Queen was working her way through the last major category of the morning, the MBES. Suddenly there was a loud bang, which some members

of the audience said afterwards they momentarily thought was a bomb. Mr Howell, seated on an upholstered banquette towards the back of the 123 ft long ballroom, about 100 ft from the Queen, was struck a glancing blow by the 18 in lump of gilded plaster fruit and foliage.

At the sound of the crash the Queen looked up, but after a momentary pause continued with the ceremony. The military band at the back of the room played on.

Palace officials and first-aiders rushed to help Mr Howell, from Wimbledon, southwest London, and carried him bleeding from the ballroom. He later joked about his experience, describ-



ing it as "a big day out that went a little bit wrong."

Good manners, page 5

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Being ever so humble, there's no place quite like this home

The Lord Chancellor yesterday unveiled the most expensive crockery in the history of English porcelain. The affair of the refurbishment of his Lords apartment, he told MPs, was "a storm in a teacup".

The venue for the teacup's press launch was a place of splendour almost rivaling Lord Irvine's own pad. The carved oak doors of Committee Room 8 at the Palace of Westminster had opened to admit a scrum of journalists to a room carpeted in red, blue and green, and exquisite wallpaper (ah, wallpaper) in red and silver. Here the Commons Select Committee on Public Administration was to question the Lord Irvine of Lairg.

Question him on what? Who cares? Journalists just wanted to see him carpeted. Opportunities to question a figure of such majesty are rare — you do not bump into Lord Irvine on buses — and we suspected that, though the Committee's inquiry was actually into information and human rights legislation, ingenious MPs would find a way to bring the

conversation round to wallpaper. Wallpaper was the story. So imagine the disappointment when the chairman, Rhodri Morgan (Lab, Cardiff W), asked about privacy laws instead. The normally grand Lord Irvine had listened to spin-doctors. "Don't blurt things out," they had advised. "Be unbleedingly humble; promise to write to them."

He was unbelievably humble. He really didn't know a lot about this, he told MPs: he wasn't the minister in charge.

It was the turn of the resentful-seeming Melanie



POLITICAL SKETCH

Johnson (Lab, Welwyn Hatfield) to question. Wallpaper, surely? Spirits sank as she began an interminable string of questions about judicial appointments. Even more humble, he promised to write to her on this and that. Was she, he asked, ever so "humbly" "hospitable to my idea?"

Richard Shepherd (C, Aldridge-Brownhills) came next, grinning sardonically.

Did he have a wallpaper question up his sleeve? No. Clever questions, cleverly asked, elicited a series of humble replies. Lord Irvine would write to Mr Shepherd, too.

Still no wallpaper. We despaired. Then the chairman called David Ruffley (Bury St Edmunds), a Tory with an instinct for the jugular. We sat up. If the Government were so

keen on freedom of information, sneered Ruffley, why was it so hard to drag the truth from the Lord Chancellor about his refurbishment plans?

Blue touch-paper: Irvine went for it. "Umility was cast aside. Interrupting the MP ("this is a speech, Mr Ruffley") he started to declaim... about wallpaper!

Hoorah! Facts and opinions, complaints, dates, justifications and protests came pouring out.

At last! Something Lord Irvine was passionate about. It was he who had volunteered

the subject. "I want to seize the wallpaper charge straight on the chin," he cried, eyes blazing.

"But we are here to talk about freedom of information," whispered Mike Hancock (Lib Dem, Portsmouth S). "This is quality wallpaper," cried the Lord Chancellor.

"Not something from a DIY store which may collapse after a year or two."

The idea of one's wallpaper falling down surprised Mike Hancock, who said "B&Q could do better. Lord Irvine looked baffled."

A colleague whispered to

him — probably telling him what B&Q was. He resumed his disquisition on interior decoration.

"When they said this would be about the pattern book," complained Rhodri Morgan, "I thought they were referring to the writings of the former Governor of Hong Kong."

It was the shrewd-seeming Andrew Tyrie (C, Chichester) who asked whether Irvine had foreseen the fuss. "A remarkable storm in a teacup," said Lord Irvine, beginning to calm down. The storm had abated.

But the teacup will be all over today's newspapers.

Corrupt officials face dismissal for their first offence

By Philip Webster, Valerie Elliott, and Mark Henderson

CORRUPT councillors and officials who bring local government into disrepute will be thrown out of office after a single offence, under plans to be unveiled by Tony Blair today.

The policy will apply if councillors breach a stringent new code of conduct, the Prime Minister will reveal. At the same time the Government is taking powers to tackle under-performing, ailing and inefficient councils. Hit squads made up of local government experts, accountants and businessmen will be sent in to take over their management.

At present such teams can only go in with the approval of local councils. Now the law will be changed to force councils to comply. But Mr Blair will also unveil new incentives for councils that are performing well. Successful councils will be rewarded with greater powers and financial flexibility, in what he says is a "carrot and stick" approach.

Mr Blair's firm line on corruption and sleaze, after years in which Labour has been embarrassed by the behaviour of a minority of its councils, are to be spelt out in

a pamphlet for the Institute of Public Policy Research, the left-leaning think tank.

In it he says the vast majority of councillors are "decent, honest and incredibly hard-working. We cannot let the behaviour of the few undermine the reputation of the many. Councillors and officials that are incompetent or corrupt not only undermine their leadership credentials but also the reputation of local government as a whole. We cannot and will not tolerate corruption."

In a fierce warning to poor councils, he says: "If you are unwilling or unable to work to the modern agenda, then the Government will have to look to other partners to take on their role." Underlining the incentive to good behaviour, he adds: "If you accept this challenge, you will not find us wanting. You can look forward to an enhanced role and new power. Your contribution will be recognized, your status enhanced."

But in the document Mr Blair directly confronts the troubles that have dogged Labour on Merseyside, Hackney and Lambeth. He scathingly speaks out about

councillors who get "trapped in the secret world of the caucus and the party group."

A key plank of his ideas is for greater community leadership, and he calls on councils to let local people have their say. He wants them to use citizens' juries, local surveys and even local referendums to identify local concerns. He will say these measures should "become part and parcel of a council's tool kit to help it exercise its leadership function."

Mr Blair will also call for new targets from every authority in Britain to improve the number of voters at local elections and to strengthen local participation in the government of their community.

Yesterday the Government announced new plans under which councils will have to ask local taxpayers which services they want their local authority to provide, and how they want them delivered.

Under the plans to scrap compulsory competitive tendering, a new system of "best value", in which councils must set and meet demanding targets for service improvement after public consultation, will be introduced.

Man who heckled Dobson is health chief

By Andrew Pierce, Political Correspondent

A HECKLER who embarrassed the Health Secretary Frank Dobson by shouting "boring" during his speech at a formal Westminster dinner was unmasked yesterday as the director of a health authority.

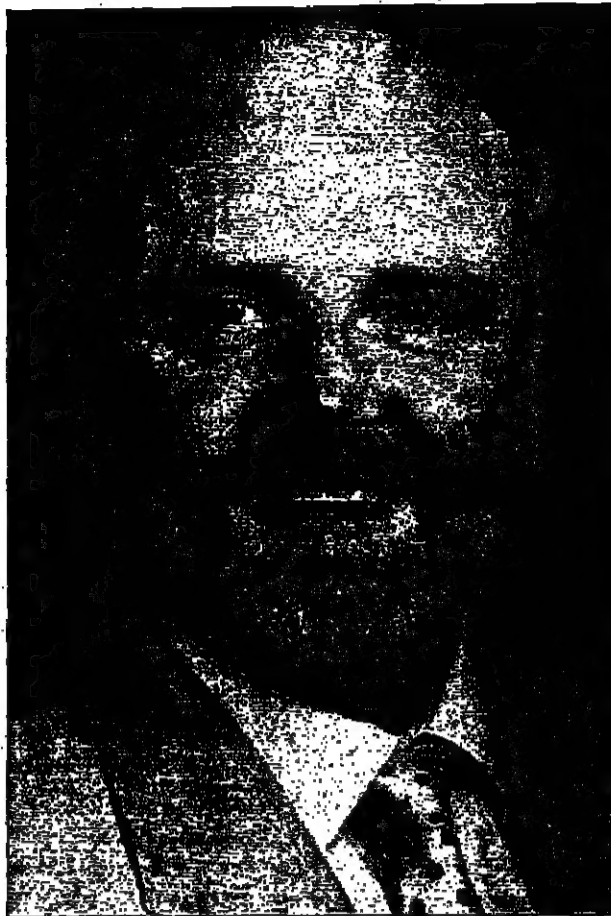
Knighton Berry, 49, a non-executive director of West Sussex Health Authority, having brought proceedings to a sudden halt with his outburst, walked out in front of hundreds of astonished guests.

His £5,000 per year part-time post on the health authority, which has an annual £400 million budget, was immediately thrown into doubt last night. An embarrassed Mr Berry apologised last night for his conduct.

Mr Dobson, who was clearly taken aback by the public

insult at the lounge suit dinner at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre, retorted: "I didn't think it was that boring," before bringing his speech to an abrupt end.

Mr Berry, an occupational psychologist who specialises in improving personnel relations in industry and commerce, was one of 700 guests at the dinner hosted by the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee. Guests had only completed their first course when the Health Secretary, who was guest of



Knighton Berry, who heckled Frank Dobson at a dinner

honour, rose to speak. With the wine flowing and the majority of the guests listening attentively, Mr Dobson reeled off his best jokes. As Mr Dobson then launched into the important role which pharmacists should play in giving advice to people who call on them, it all became too much. Mr Berry stood up and shouted: "You're boring, Frank. I'm leaving." He turned on his heel and

walked out. Tory MPs in the 700-strong audience confessed they had never seen anything like it at such a formal occasion.

Mr Berry said last night: "I deeply regret the remarks I made about the Secretary of State's speech. I would like to place my apologies on record to Mr Dobson, the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, and the hundreds of guests present."

Dons see red over Cambridge gowns proposal

By John O'Leary, Education Editor

CAMBRIDGE University has been forced to reconsider proposals to lift a centuries-old ban on the wearing of other universities' gowns on formal occasions, after a revolt in the dons' parliament yesterday.

The ceremonial, known as "scarlet days" after the colour of Cambridge higher-degree gowns, have been the subject of controversy for two decades. Dons who graduated from other universities are obliged to wear the black Cambridge MA gown for degree congregations and other meetings requiring formal academic dress.

In a strongly worded report to the ruling Regent House, the university council recommended relaxing the rule because it said it was "no longer acceptable to divide the staff of the university into sheep and goats according to their place of graduation".

A similar proposal for change, in 1979, was defeated by 151 votes to 88. But, with the rules for membership of Regent House changing in the interim, it was expected that the university leadership's desire not to be considered discourteous to other institutions would carry the day. After an impassioned debate, however, the traditionalists won the first stage of their battle to maintain the status

quo. Dr Christopher Morley, a fellow of Trinity College, who had refused to sign the council's motion, said the change would replace scarlet days with "mottled days".

Dr Joan Whitehead, an education lecturer and Open University graduate, who had described the restrictions as "a bit insulting" to other universities, appealed for dons' support for the change. But the proposal was referred back to the council for consideration next term.

Timothy Milner, a Cambridge MA and expert on academic dress, said the proposal would allow him to wear his University of Wales gown over "Lyca, lime bathing shorts". Present rules require dons to wear dark, sober clothes beneath gowns, but Cambridge could not make rules for other universities.

John Baker, professor of English legal history, said the plan was motivated by vanity. "Whatever some people seem nowadays to think, the prime purpose of academic dress is not to aggrandise the wearer," he said.

Mr Milner argued that academics should be allowed to wear a Cambridge gown equivalent to that awarded by their own university, a right already accorded to graduates of Oxford University.

Editor defends Times coverage of China

By Our Foreign Staff

THE Chinese coverage of *The Times* was attacked last night by Jonathan Mirsky, its former East Asia Editor, who claimed coverage had been curtailed to suit the interests of Rupert Murdoch. The claim was originally made in a speech to a meeting of the Freedom Forum in London last month and has recently become available on the Internet.

Dr Mirsky said that, from four days after the handover, readers of *The Times* would have thought that Hong Kong had been airlifted to Pluto. He said: "We have been what is arguably the traditionally most famous paper in the world, and it has just decided — it has not taken an executive decision, but an owner's position — to leave China and Hong Kong alone."

He also accused the Editor of being over-influenced by an official visit to China.

Last night Peter Stothard, the Editor of *The Times*, strongly rebutted Dr Mirsky's allegations. Mr Stothard said in a statement: "The China coverage of

The Times is wholly and solely in the hands of the Editor. I have never taken an editorial decision to suit Mr Murdoch's interests. Nor have I ever been asked to."

"The *Times* has always given support to the Patten reforms in Hong Kong. The intensity and frequency of that support has varied with my assessment of the facts and circumstances. Our treatment of China is the same as any other country in that respect. No other factor has been relevant other than my own assessment and that of a small number of colleagues, including Dr Mirsky. Contrary to his account, Dr Mirsky never wrote leaders for *The Times*."

"Dr Mirsky says that there have been no leaders on China or Hong Kong since May. There have been at least six. In recent months the economic and political crises in other countries in Asia have attracted our and others' attention more. I am not surprised that Dr Mirsky should be unhappy about this. No correspondent likes the spotlight to leave his or her patch. I am only surprised at the virulence of the

attacks on colleagues whose news judgments differed from his own."

"Like every foreign correspondent, Dr Mirsky wrote more copy than appeared in the paper. Like every correspondent, he had regular discussions with the Foreign Desk about what was wanted to tell the story to British readers. Like every correspondent, he had disagreements about what should and should not be written and published."

"During 1997 *The Times* published 218 news stories on China, 124 by Jonathan Mirsky and 94 by our Beijing correspondent, James Fringle. *The Daily Telegraph* in the same period ran 192 stories."

"Many stories in *The Times* have been fiercely critical of Chinese policies. Many, but not all, of these have been written by Dr Mirsky. They included a supportive review of the Dimbleby book on Patten which backed the Governor's case for his 'betrayal' by London. *The Times* also ran a leader supporting Patten's role in the Dimbleby book."

"Dr Mirsky's account of my own trip

to China last year is a travesty of the truth. I was never promised an interview with President Jiang Zemin or any Chinese leader. I offered the Embassy areas that I would like to discuss if any meeting or interview were arranged. I was happy to see Deputy Premier Zhu Rongji with whom, after discussion with Dr Mirsky and others, I raised the case of the dissidents Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan. This subject was indeed not welcome to the Deputy Premier, who replied that he had not intended our meeting to be an interview."

"Dr Mirsky has a distinguished record as a commentator and academic analyst of China, which is why I appointed him four and a half years ago. Our Beijing correspondent, James Fringle, is a veteran foreign correspondent whose experience of China, with Reuters and Newsweek, goes back to the Cultural Revolution. It is Mr Fringle's coverage from Beijing which Mr Mirsky describes as being 'not in a serious way'. I am disappointed that he should take that view of a respected colleague."

Patten China book row

Continued from page 1
Patten's agent Michael Sissons was able to "work it for a lot of publicity to sell a lot more books."

Mr Murdoch added that the decision to drop Mr Patten's book had been entirely his initiative: "I have never been under any pressure from the Chinese or asked to do anything."

Most commentators have assumed that the book was dropped to safeguard News Corp's economic prospects in China. But Mr Murdoch suggested that the motives may have been, at least partly, more personal. "I have always been a bit negative about him [Chris Patten] ever since I thought he was undermining [Baroness] Thatcher. And I think he made a bit of a fool of himself out there [Hong Kong] after suddenly discovering democracy at the end of a 100-year rule. If he had discovered

it a little earlier, it might have been more convincing, but that's all."

He believes that no one has been hurt by the row "except us in a PR sense because our people cooked it up at the end. I just regret that our people weren't more forthright about it at the very beginning when I was with them."

Mr Murdoch's comments came as the potential rebellion of authors appeared to gather pace. At least three have now withdrawn books from the publishers, and Mr Patten's literary agent says he cannot contemplate submitting any new material to HarperCollins until certain conditions were met, including acknowledging "the wrong that has been done to both Chris Patten and Stuart Proffitt."

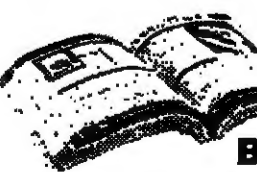
But Mr Murdoch played down the importance of an authors' rebellion. "Harper-

Collins is a fine publishing house with a great history and it will go on. You are always concerned if important authors desert but there is always a difference of opinion about who the important authors are and we do over 1,000 books a year. This is being whipped up by the obvious papers."

On the press coverage, the News Corp chairman said he would not be worried if it were only "the regular Murdoch haters", *The Independent* and *The Guardian*. But he added: "It's the *Telegraph* that is giving it the run."

Despite the criticisms of HarperCollins executives and, by implication, the executive chairman Eddie Bell, there are no signs that heads are about to roll. One possibility is that Mr Bell will become chief executive of HarperCollins and a new chairman will be appointed.

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M&S victory on Granada TV's child labour slur

By FRANCES GIBB, TIM JONES AND PETER FOSTER

GRANADA Television publicly apologised to Marks and Spencer yesterday and agreed to pay an estimated £50,000 damages and more than £600,000 costs over a television programme alleging that the company exploited child labour.

The sudden settlement was reached just three days into a six-week trial after Mr Justice Poplewell invited the jury to view the programme and decide what it meant without hearing any evidence from witnesses.

In a move that promised to keep costs down and save court time, the judge asked the jurors to indicate what message they thought that the programme had conveyed to millions of viewers. Lengthy submissions by the opposing sides were thus avoided and no evidence from witnesses on the facts of the case was heard by the jury.

In a traditional libel trial both sides have the chance to argue over the truth of the allegations and to cross-examine witnesses. Instead, without anyone entering the witness box, the jury was faced with a choice between two contrasting interpretations of the programme.

After hearing short submissions from each side, the jury held that the *World in Action* programme, *St Michael: has the halo slipped?*, broadcast in January 1996, did give millions of viewers the impression the company had deliberately misled customers by selling foreign-made garments labelled "Made in the UK".

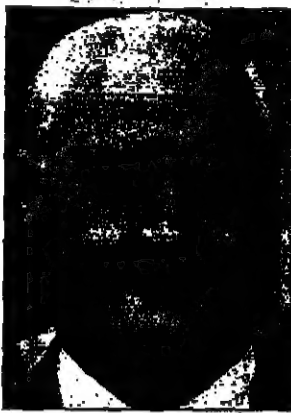
Lawyers yesterday said the move by the judge to turn the action into a "sudden death" trial could pave the way for swift settlements.

Legal costs of between £750,000 and £1 million were estimated to have been saved, although £1 million in costs had been run up already. Lawyers will not be paid for the days not spent in court.

But more crucially, the future libel actions if evidence in a case is not heard, a vital weapon, for the purpose of

defendants, who bank on the exposure a plaintiff faces in a libel suit as a disincentive to actions, is removed.

Marks and Spencer had alleged that the programme was defamatory because it suggested the company knowingly and deliberately misled its customers by labelling foreign-made garments "Made in the UK". Granada insisted the programme meant only that Marks and



Greenbury: good name "is our greatest asset"

Spencer had not made adequate checks about the conditions in which the garments were made.

Yesterday George Carman QC, for Marks and Spencer, told Mr Justice Poplewell and the jury that there was "no truth whatsoever" in the allegations, and this was accepted by Granada "without reservation". The programme had "plunged a dagger" into the heart of a great British institution whose reputation had been "savaged, assassinated and destroyed", he added.

Charles Gray, QC, for Granada, said the television company had never meant to convey, and did not believe it had conveyed, the meanings ascribed by the jury, although it accepted the verdict. The programme had said

that the factory investigated by Granada had in the past lawfully employed a small proportion of 13 and 14-year-olds as apprentices, and that one consignment of pyjamas made at the factory was mislabelled "Made in the UK". The girls had worked a 49-hour week in sweltering conditions for as little as 10 pence per hour.

Marks and Spencer accepted those facts but said it was "totally ignorant of them at the time". As a result of the programme, the company stopped doing business with the supplier.

After the settlement, Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks and Spencer, said: "We are delighted at the outcome of this case, which vindicates the decision to defend our reputation vigorously. I am proud to be chairman of this company, with its traditions of caring and straight-dealing. Our good name is our greatest asset. We will always take firm action to protect our reputation."

Granada Television said the jury's interpretation of its *World in Action* programme had no bearing on the facts uncovered by its journalists, which it stood by.

The judge's unusual move could bring to an end the long show-case trials featuring spats between top Queen's Counsel, where the meaning of an alleged libel is a key part of the dispute. It is also the latest sign of a more "hands-on" approach by judges, who now have to control the pace of litigation as proposed by Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls.

Gerardine Prouder, solicitor for Marks and Spencer, said: "If this is what's going to happen from now on, it's the sudden death option — or Russian roulette."

Patrick Swaffar, solicitor for Granada, said his reaction was one of bewilderment. He added: "This has never been done before. It is entirely unsatisfactory because it gave us no opportunity for the jury to consider all the issues together."



Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare poses with Dame Edna Everage at his London penthouse, overlooking most of the city he hopes to rule as mayor. The bestselling author had invited the world's press yesterday to announce that he is investing in a £700,000 musical spectacle starring Australia's pantomime dame (Dame Edna Everage) in a grand entrance into his reception room. Dame Edna performed to the cameras in a diamond-studded purple dress that matched her famous horn-rimmed glasses and purple wig and

Lord and dame make spectacle of themselves

clashed with his paintings by Monet and Picasso. The musical will be her story — her childhood, youth and marriage. Her creator, Barry Humphries, described her as "a kind of upmarket Judi Dench, an attractive Glenda Jackson and a well-dressed Diana Rigg".

Although Lord Archer was laughing, he looked a little awkward, twice developing a sudden need to straighten neatly stacked art books on a coffee-table. He was at his most relaxed when discussing the serious side of the business, noting how his investment involves

two anonymous friends, and that he invests in the theatre "all the time". He mentioned a small involvement in *Phantom of the Opera* that has paid off. A cheque arrives every three months, he said. He made a loss on *Martin Guerre* "but I don't look upon it as a way of making money". Edna, the Spectacle Returns, with lyrics by Mr Humphries and Kit Hesketh-Harvey and music by James McConnel, opens in Guildford on March 12 and transfers to the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on March 21.

Full Monty faces £60 m plagiarism suit

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

THE makers of *The Full Monty* film have been served with a \$100 million (£60 million) plagiarism lawsuit by two writers who say the film is based on their play.

Stephen Sinclair and Anthony McCarten, both New Zealanders, claimed in a Los Angeles court that the British hit about unemployed steelworkers who turn to stripping for a living "badly appropriated" their 1987 play entitled *Ladies Night*. They are demanding *The Full Monty*'s

entire worldwide profits. The lawsuit was criticised as the latest bid by aggrieved writers to cash in on a box office stampede.

"It seems like these days almost every film has this kind of claim," Bert Fields, a defence lawyer for Fox Searchlight Pictures who also represented Dreamworks SKG in its recent battle over the script of *Amistad*, said.

The allegation is a severe blow to the film's chances of winning an Oscar. It was nominated for four Academy Awards and the vote are due in by March 17, giving the

film's backers a fortnight to defuse a publicist's nightmare. Plagiarism is notoriously hard to prove under US law but the New Zealanders have launched a carefully timed broadside. Claiming the film lifts its entire cast and plot from *Ladies Night*, they have argued that *The Full Monty*'s screenplay should have been nominated by the Academy as "adapted", not "original".

"They have also sought a permanent injunction banning further commercial exploitation of the film, whose release on video is expected to earn more than \$100 million."

Made for \$3.5 million, it has already earned over \$200 million at the international box office, making it one of the most profitable films ever.

Uberto Pasolini, producer of *The Full Monty*, said yesterday that his film was "a wholly, completely original piece of work". He admitted its premise was not unique, telling the *Los Angeles Times* that Granada Television had begun work on a similar project called *The Bare Necessities*. But, challenged specifically about *Ladies Night*, he insisted: "I haven't seen the play, and no-one connected with the

film has seen the play." First performed in New Zealand in 1987, *Ladies Night* features a group of unemployed men in a northern British city cajoled into stripping for money. It became New Zealand's most successful play and was performed in British theatres more than 500 times between 1990 and 1996, the lawsuit claims.

Donald Engel, the plaintiffs' lawyer, denied the suit was timed to inflict maximum embarrassment in the middle of the Oscar season. "We prepared the case about as quickly as we could," he said.

Teenager allowed to appeal over murder case

By ADAM FRESKO

A TEENAGER convicted of helping to murder his domineering mother, with his brother and father was given leave to appeal yesterday.

John Howells, now 17, had admitted one of the help to dispose of the woman's hammer that his brother, Glenn, now 18, used to beat their mother Eve to death at their home in Huddersfield. Mrs Howells, a history and religious education teacher, was said to have intimidated her family for years.

Glenn had admitted manslaughter on the ground of provocation. Both teenagers were ordered to be detained during Her Majesty's pleasure. David Howells, 49, was jailed for life for plotting his wife's killing.

Howells senior was yesterday denied leave to appeal against his conviction. His counsel had argued that security recorded conversations between him and his sons while they were detained by police should not have been used in the trial.

Aidan Marron QC, for John Howells, successfully argued that the jury had been allowed to hear the issue of provocation for Glenn and should have been allowed to hear the case of provocation on behalf of John.

Murdered doctor's family sue boyfriend

By MICHAEL HORNELL

THE family of a doctor strangled with the cord of a vacuum cleaner three years ago began a civil action yesterday against a former boyfriend.

Joan Francisco's family are seeking up to £50,000 damages from Anthony Dietrick for assault and battery. He has never been charged with the crime, and it is believed to be the first time that civil action has been taken against a person suspected of murder without a preceding criminal prosecution.

Relatives claim that Mr Dietrick, 38, a computer studies graduate, had a "violent and perverted obsession" with

Dr Francisco, 27, that reached a crisis point, the High Court was told yesterday.

Mr Dietrick is alleged to have stalked Dr Francisco for months before the murder, using a £200 body-heat detector to check that she was at home, and a listening device, which he placed against a kitchen window.

Dr Francisco's body was found in the hallway of her basement flat in St John's Wood, northwest London, on Boxing Day 1994.

Her mother, Venus, 59, and elder sister, Margrene, 37, sat only feet away from Mr Dietrick as Patrick O'Connor, QC, for the family, said that

they sought to prove that he was the murderer. He described the young doctor, an obstetrician at Queen Charlotte Hospital, West London, as a "highly intelligent, successful and beautiful woman" who had ended a two-year relationship with Mr Dietrick about six years before.

Mr O'Connor told Mr Justice Auld that Mr Dietrick "harboured a violent and perverted obsession for her in the intervening years. That obsession intensified in the months before Christmas 1994 and reached crisis on the day of her murder."

He added: "The family's case is this was no random crime never to be solved. The nature of the murder calls for a very unusual explanation, specific to the deceased personally and to some relationship with the murderer."

Her death, from asphyxia, happened between 8.50am and 9.40am when she rang again. Dr Francisco, who had been due to fly to California that day for a holiday with her sister, had not been sexually assaulted, nor was there any evidence of a burglary. It was no coincidence, Mr O'Connor said, that Mr Dietrick knew of her departure and imagined she was leaving permanently. The case continues.



Joan Francisco was allegedly stalked by Anthony Dietrick. He has never been charged with murder

Pair who recruited killer are accused

By SIMON DE BRUCELLES

TWO men who recruited a 6ft 5in robber to raid a jeweller's shop became murderers when he stabbed the shop owner to death, a court was told yesterday.

Orlando Sir stabbed Gerry Hales, a 61-year-old grandfather, 34 times with a commando knife in front of passers-by in Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan. He had been taken to the shop on the back of a motorcycle driven by Charles Frayne while Dallas Lee walked in a getaway car. Cardiff Crown Court was told.

Sir, 28, from Brighton, who has pleaded guilty to murdering Mr Hales, also stabbed a passer-by who went to the dying man's rescue.

John Charles Rees, QC, for the prosecution, told the jury: "This was a well-planned and high-stakes robbery involving all three men. They knew Sir was armed and they knew violence might be used. It's inconceivable they did not think anyone might stop Sir. These two cannot escape responsibility for the actions of a man they recruited from outside the area to actually commit the robbery."

Both Mr Lee, 27, of Brynna, and Frayne, 21, of Penwyn, Cardiff, deny murder and wounding with intent. Lee also denies robbery, which Frayne has admitted.

Joseph Gatt, 28, a floor layer, was passing in his van when he spotted the masked man attacking the shopkeeper. Mr Gatt told the court he acted by instinct. "I thought he was punching the

jeweller. Then I realised he was stabbing him. He was also kicking and head-butting him. It was a horrific fight. I got out of the van and charged towards the chap fighting the jeweller. I hit and tackled him from behind and all three of us fell on the floor."

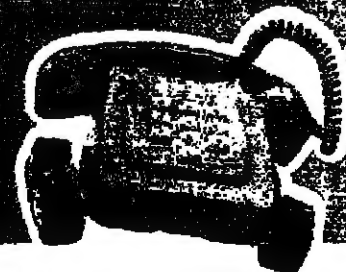
"I started fighting the chap with the helmet on the floor. At first I thought I was being punched. Then I realised I had been stabbed several times."

Mr Gatt was operated on for his injuries and was in hospital for eight days. He had been stabbed seven times in his left side.

Mr Rees said that Sir fled with passers-by in pursuit, dropping most of the £27,000 of jewels he had stolen. The trial continues.

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Yellow ribbons fly again for au pair

By Russell Jenkins and Daniel McGrory

LOUISE WOODWARD's vilage in Cheshire is busily replacing the ragged yellow ribbons still fluttering around trees, lampposts and garden gates with fresh ones in time for her appeal.

Her supporters will watch the proceedings unfold in the Supreme Judicial Court in Boston, Massachusetts, on Friday afternoon on a giant satellite television screen in the bar of The Rigger public house in the centre of Eton.

However, given the disapproval that greeted the joyous scenes when Miss Woodward was freed in November, they say their celebrations will be more low key if she succeeds.

They will have to wait up to seven weeks for the outcome of the appeals. Miss Woodward, 20, is appealing against conviction and the prosecution is calling for her to be returned to jail after the trial judge replaced a verdict of murder with one of manslaughter in the death of the child in her care. Meanwhile, Miss Woodward must remain in Boston, living with her lawyer, Elaine Whitfield Sharp.

Robertson urges Gulf forces to have anthrax jab

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

ALL 3,500 servicemen and women in the Gulf, on land, in ships or in aircraft over Iraq, were urged strongly by the Government yesterday to have anthrax vaccinations.

As encouragement to the troops, George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, John Reid, the Armed Forces Minister, General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the Defence Staff, and Air Marshal John Baird, the Surgeon-General, went to St Thomas' Hospital in London to have anthrax jabs.

Mr Robertson, who is due to fly to the Gulf shortly to meet the British forces, has written to all servicemen and women in the area, and to their families at home, to explain why he believes the anthrax vaccination programme is necessary. His letter said: "The fact is that Saddam Hussein has lied and cheated about his programme to acquire weapons of mass destruction. This is why you are in the Gulf, to ensure he does not rebuild his capability. But

it does mean that, while we currently judge the threat of him using such weapons as low, we cannot be wholly certain that this will not change in the future."

Mr Robertson has been receiving advice from a medical committee, set up only last month under Peter Blain, Professor of Environmental Medicine at Newcastle University, and on his advice he decided that a vaccination programme should begin immediately.

The British announcement coincided with similar statements by the United States and Canada.

The anthrax vaccine will be given to the forces personnel in four stages. The fourth jab will be given 32 weeks after the first.

When the latest crisis with Iraq erupted, it was disclosed that Iraq had produced thousands of litres of deadly anthrax spores, some of which had been installed in rocket warheads. Anthrax vaccine

was sent to the Gulf when the Government deployed an aircraft carrier to the region and eight Tornado GR1 bombers. However, none of the British forces was vaccinated because the threat of a biological attack was assessed to be very low. Forces personnel are being told that the anthrax vaccine is safe and well tested.

Prior to the Gulf War in 1991, the Ministry of Defence gave forces the pertussis (whooping cough) vaccine as a booster to the anthrax jab, despite a warning from the Department of Health that the combination posed risks. The advice was not seen by ministers.

This time, senior MoD officials said yesterday, the pertussis vaccine would not be used, but they denied that this was because of suspicions that the mixture of vaccines might have caused the so-called Gulf War syndrome.

Simon Jenkins, page 18
Letters, page 19



George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, being vaccinated against anthrax yesterday

Valentine deal 'led to obsession' with florist

By Russell Jenkins

A FLORIST was driven to despair after a lovesick businessman stalked her for two years, a court was told yesterday. Christine Simpson, 32, was said to have been inundated with unwanted flowers, chocolates, love letters and telephone calls by Robert Dawson, 32.

Minshull Street Crown Court, Manchester, was told that Miss Simpson was so tormented that she sought help from a psychiatrist. She was prescribed beta-blockers by her GP to cope with panic attacks and depression.

Mr Dawson, a property dealer of Clifton, near Manchester, denies inflicting grievous bodily harm causing psychological damage.

The couple met when he bought flowers at her shop. Miss Simpson refused a dinner date but two months later struck a business deal with him over the sale of chocolates and flowers on Valentine's Day.

Stuart Neale, for the defence, suggested that the letters were more affectionate than threatening.

The trial continues.

Prisons plan to sterilise needles for drug users

By Richard Ford, Home Correspondent

PRISONS are planning to introduce a "clean needle" scheme to prevent the spread of hepatitis and HIV among drug-taking inmates.

Joyce Quin, the Prisons Minister, is considering a pilot scheme in which sterilising equipment would be used on prison wings to cut the risk of spreading disease. Doctors are already permitted to prescribe condoms to inmates, to reduce the danger of infection among them.

The need for cleaning equipment to be made available in jails is highlighted today in a report by Sir David Ramsbottom, the Chief Inspector of Prisons. He found that up to 30 prisoners were sharing one syringe and needle at Epsom House prison, near Devizes, Wiltshire.

Sir David calls for urgent action by the Prison Service to address the problem. "There is a clear need for the Prison Service to reconsider the availability of cleaning equipment for needles to encourage harm reduction," he writes.

The Chief Inspector says that clear guidance is needed about the issue of sterilising equipment to those at high risk from sharing needles.

The proposal put to ministers would involve issuing a tablet containing disinfectant which prisoners could use to clean equipment. About 18 months ago tablets were withdrawn when it was discovered that there was a safety danger

when inmates collected large numbers and burnt them to produce chlorine gas.

In his report on Epsom House, Sir David says that substance abuse at the jail was a major problem. Evidence indicated that the use of injectable drugs was increasing.

"Received intelligence showed very considerable sharing of injecting equipment, with up to 30 people sharing one syringe and needle," he says. "This was substantiated by the sizeable numbers of patients found to be infected with hepatitis C."

Sir David outlines the difficulties facing prison officers who attempt to curb heroin abuse in the jail. "Unless prisoners are discovered in the act, this is an extremely difficult issue to tackle. Needles are almost always very carefully hidden, and destroyed when no longer required."

He says that prisoners told his inspection team that drugs were brought into the jail by inmates working outside the prison or were thrown over the fence and collected in the grounds. Prisoners told Sir David that it was only the desperate who had drugs smuggled into them during visits from friends and family.

In 1996, Ann Widdecombe, then Prisons Minister, became the first minister to admit publicly that medical officers in the Prison Service were permitted to dispense condoms.

Frankly, my dear, women do give a damn

By Robin Young

YOUNG women are increasingly irritated by over-familiar terms of address, according to an opinion poll published today.

They object particularly strongly to being called babe, pet, dear, love, duck, sweetheart, gorgeous, sexy, gorgeous, beautiful, etc. Calling women chick, as in *Coronation Street*, meets equally little approval.

Two thirds of women aged 15 to 24 object to being called dear or duck by tradesmen or workers that they have never met before, the NOP report says.

Women over 65, however, are rather flattered by it and only one in three raises any objection, according to the poll, which surveyed 1,000 men and women.

The report found that the style once thought of as informal and friendly is now resented as patronising and sexist.

Eric Morecambe used to call guests "Sunbeam". Charlie Drake referred to everyone as "My darling", and Vera Duckworth, of *Coronation Street*, uses the term "chick". Overall there is an even split between

those who object and those who do not, according to the survey carried out for *Bella* magazine.

Yorkshire people were the least likely to take offence, but that has not stopped Leeds council from banning its switchboard operators from calling people love.

Around half those polled object to people such as doctors, receptionists and shop assistants, treating them as if they were old friends. But three in four had no objection when the informality came from a nurse or someone in other caring professions.

Despite that, some hospitals, including Kings Mill Hospital in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, have banned all staff from calling patients pet or dear.

Jackie Higne, *Bella*'s editor-in-chief, said: "I come from Yorkshire, where we all call each other duck or dear or some other name, but the problem is not what is said but who says it and in what tone and when. If a tradesman you have never met calls you love, it can be patronising."

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Financial Highlights		
	1997	1996 (Unaudited)
Profit before tax (£m)*	1,649	1,430
Total assets (£m)	131,100	116,075
Earnings per share (p)	44.2	37.5
Proposed dividend per share (p)	17.5	N/A

*Excluding exceptional items.

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200	£35
400	£70
600	£105
800	£140
1000	£175

The above financial information has been extracted from the audited Report & Accounts of Halifax plc for the year ended 31st December 1997. The proposed dividend is subject to approval by the shareholders. A copy of the results is available by contacting Halifax Shareholder Services on (0800) 523666.

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Height of good manners at the Palace

Kathryn Knight
on how falling
masonry was not
enough to disrupt
a royal occasion

THE ceiling may have fallen in at yesterday's Buckingham Palace investiture, but that was clearly no reason for lowering standards. Even the victim's father kept strictly to his place in the official line, out of respect for the Queen and because he did not want to cause a scene.

"I didn't move away from the ceremony at first because I thought it was good British manners to keep my place," said Keith Howell, who was receiving the insignia of his OBE. He spotted his son, Nick, fall in a shower of plaster. "I saw him being taken to the first aid room so, when I could, I just made a little bow and moved away."

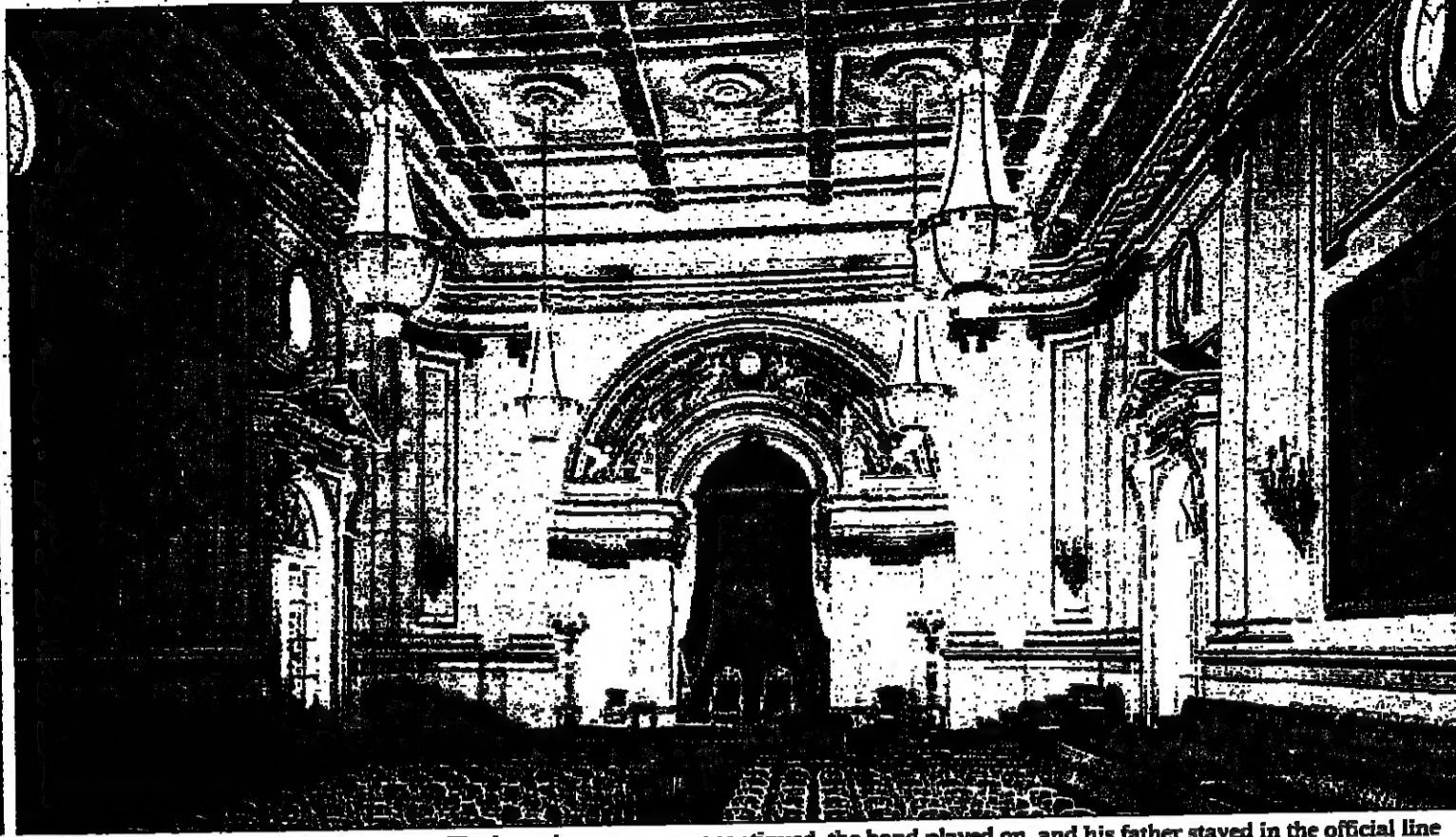
Later, Nick Howell showed equal resolve as he emerged from his hospital cubicle with nine stitches, two cuts in his head and a useful smile, and said it was all a "good tale to tell down the pub". Mr Howell, 28, whose bloodied shirt and suit still bore heavy dustings of plaster, said he bore no grudge despite having to miss his family's celebratory lunch in Covent Garden.

"My dad had just got his award and I was reading the programme and the next thing I knew something hit me on my head and leg," he recalled. "The next thing, there was lots of blood around. It was a huge shock. I just knew something had hurt my head. It was my first time at the Palace. Everyone was really good. It was a big day out and it has gone a little bit wrong."

His father, 58, heard a bang as he was in a line of recipients returning to their seats. "I glanced around and I saw the person at the end of the row of seats had fallen over. I knew it was Nick. I



The injured Nick Howell and the ballroom where his family's big day went "a little bit wrong". The investiture ceremony continued, the band played on, and his father stayed in the official line



DUST OF JUSTICE

A freak gust of wind dislodged debris from the ceiling of Court 3 at the Royal Courts of Justice, covering the Lord Chief Justice and lawyers in sooty dust. Lord Bingham of Cornwall asked the court clerk: "Could you inform the powers that be that the ceiling is falling apart?"

thought, "Oh goodness, he's gone and fallen asleep. When I saw the bits of plaster, I realised what had happened."

The victim's brother Christopher, 26, a policeman said: "There was an almighty crash and there was plaster and dust all over me."

"I looked to my side and my brother was slumped over. It looked far worse at first because there was blood ev-

erywhere and you couldn't see where it was coming from. I asked if he was all right and he just sort of mumbled."

The injured man, who works for a chemical company, was helped from the ballroom and treated by Palace staff before an ambulance was called. The ceremony continued, and the band played on.

The family, from Surbiton, southwest London, had planned to pose for pictures in the Buckingham Palace gardens to commemorate their special day, but instead Mr Howell found himself in the back of an ambulance racing to St Thomas' hospital.

His mother, Margaret, 57, said the family had thought they had plum seats in the audience because they were slightly raised. "We had a great view and I thought we'd got the best seats. If I'd known, we wouldn't have sat there."

Ceiling was surveyed three weeks ago

No fault was found, but an earlier report warned of injuries, writes Alan Hamilton

SPENDING on maintenance at Buckingham Palace is not only failing to keep pace with inflation, it is actually falling, according to the Royal Household's annual accounts.

Last year, the Household spent £5.1 million on the fabric of the Palace, compared with £5.4 million in 1996. Officials insist, however, that the shortfall is a result of more efficient management and that essential work to keep the building sound and safe is not skipped.

Since the Royal Household took over the running of the occupied royal palaces from the Government's now-defunct Property Services Agency in 1991, it has ordered a major structural survey every five years. The last was in 1992 and another is in progress at present: the ballroom ceiling was inspected as part of the survey only three weeks ago and nothing was found to be unduly amiss. "There were hairline cracks,

but nothing to suggest a structural fault," the Palace said yesterday.

The ceiling was doubly inspected in 1992, when it was redecorated as part of a separate programme as well as being inspected by the building surveyors. They apparently found nothing wrong. However, in 1990, the PSA produced a 1,000-page confidential report which effectively criticised its own past stewardship of the Palace and which portrayed the Queen's official London residence as being in a particularly sorry state.

It listed deteriorating roofs, cracked stonework and rotting windows and, in one particularly apposite paragraph, noted: "Pieces of stucco are falling off. Where the defective surfaces are over courtyards, staircases

and galleries, there is some risk of injury to persons and works of art." The ballroom ceiling was not specifically mentioned. It recommended a programme of remedial works spread over 25 years, with £7.7 million being spent in the first ten.

The report died with the end of the PSA's responsibility for the royal palaces in 1991, and although the Royal Household has spent substantially more than the recommended £7.7 million since then, it has not necessarily followed the report's recommendations. "A lot of the things they said needed doing were unnecessary, so they have not gone ahead," a Palace official admitted recently.

In evidence to the National Audit Office in 1984, the Royal Household

criticised the 1990 report as being of "limited usefulness", but insisted that any backlog of essential maintenance identified by the report had been carried out.

Yesterday, the Palace insisted that a reduction in the annual maintenance budget did not mean that corners were being cut. "The fall in the ballroom was a great surprise. It is the first time any such thing has happened at an official event. Because costs have gone down it does not mean less maintenance — the savings have largely been in management," a spokeswoman said.

Buckingham Palace has its origins in a town house built for the Duke of Buckingham in 1702, but little of today's original remains. Most of today's Palace dates from a major reconstruction in the 1820s by John Nash for George IV. The ballroom is a further remodelling by Prince Albert for Queen Victoria in 1856.



A car without Bosch

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Clergy alerted to risk of dealing with strangers

THE tradition that parish priests are available to all the people all the time is an impossible and outdated notion, the Church of England said yesterday.

The admission follows growing concern over the safety of priests who frequently make late-night visits and deal with unknown casual callers and the mentally ill. A reminder of the dangers faced by clergy came last weekend when two masked gunmen attacked a priest in Lincoln on Saturday night. They fired an air rifle through the letterbox of St Botolph's vicarage and hit the Rev John Hayes in the face with a crowbar.

Yesterday the Church initiated a nationwide discussion on security, acting on a request from the House of Bishops after a spate of attacks in the summer of 1996. In the foreword to the 27-page discussion paper, the Archbishop of Canterbury and York say they are "deeply concerned about attacks on the clergy and their families", and urge church council members across the country to consider security matters.

The paper, which was prepared by a group of clerics, discovered a "remarkable naivety" among some clergy when it came to taking sensible precautions to avoid potentially dangerous or violent

Assaults by casual callers threaten the notion of open house, writes Peter Foster

situations. The authors used the example of the life of Christ to justify their claims that modern priests should not have to be available to their congregations all the time. "This might have been a meaningful vision in an 18th-century small village, but, in a town or city and in the late 20th century, it can be seriously dangerous."

Modern clergy, they concluded, needed many of the same rights that most workers took for granted, such as a weekly day off, proper holidays and time to relax with family and friends, if they were to avoid stress-related illnesses.

As well as recommendations on security at vicarages, the paper advises on the correct response to strangers who knock on vicarage doors asking for money or food.

Priests should consider whether to offer pastoral care or refer callers to other agencies, such as social services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Rethink or Alcoholics Anonymous.

If priests decide to offer more than information, they are advised to keep food from harvest festival services to hand out, use vouchers of up to £4 for a local café, or to keep a stock of canned drinks to "save having to make tea at an inconvenient time".

The authors admit that some of their suggestions may appear "stark and uncompromising", but say this is a reflection of the modern society in which we live. "Some with years of experience say that the type of caller has changed so much that clergy should not attempt to get involved, except on the level of giving information or making referrals."

A survey of 21 parochial clergy in an East London deanery, which was highlighted in the discussion paper, showed that 80 per cent had had their homes broken into and 70 per cent had been assaulted or threatened. Only one had any formal training on security, and 95 per cent said no one was aware of where they were or who they were visiting during their day-to-day work.



Gullit: access claim

Gullit and wife in court over child access

RUUD GULLIT, the former Chelsea manager, and his estranged wife appeared in the High Court yesterday at a hearing to decide on access to their two children, aged six and four, who live with their mother in Italy.

The Dutch football star and Christina Pensa, 32, a model, sat feet from each other at the closed hearing in London. Mr Gullit, 34, who has been married twice, now lives with Estelle Cruyff, 21, niece of the former footballer Johan Cruyff. They have a baby son.

Mr Gullit is reported to be paying Ms Pensa maintenance of £4,000 a month. His first marriage, to Yvonne De Vries, with whom he has two daughters, collapsed in 1990.

Sport, pages 41, 44



Christina Pensa, Ruud Gullit's estranged wife, arriving at the High Court yesterday

Painful patients scare the dentists

By IAN MURRAY

DENTISTS are becoming frightened of their patients. Three-quarters of surgery staff in a survey had been verbally abused over the past three years, and more than 5 per cent had been physically attacked.

The dentist is twice as likely to be punched or threatened with violence as the rest of the staff, who usually have to put up with more verbal abuse, according to the British Dental Association.

The association is campaigning for a legal change to enable NHS dentists to remove abusive patients from their lists immediately. While a GP can ban unwanted patients in a week, dentists have to wait three months. During that time, they are required to carry on treating them.

More than 300 practices took part in the association's survey. In one case, a male patient grabbed a woman community dentist from behind as she walked through the grounds of the hospital where she worked. She managed to escape when he loosened his grip as she started screaming for help.

At present, 27 per cent of dentists are women, but, as half of all dental students are now female, the proportion within the profession is rising all the time and the association says that they can be especially vulnerable.

Long walks help to ward off diabetes

By IAN MURRAY
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

PEOPLE who regularly go on long walks are less likely to develop diabetes and heart diseases. Researchers have discovered that the exercise helps the body to make better use of naturally produced insulin.

The hormone's function is to promote the absorption of glucose in the liver, where it is stored for use as energy. Diabetes sufferers have too little insulin, which means that glucose builds up in the blood and is not available as energy.

The research, based on a study of 1,467 people aged from 40 to 69, including some with mild diabetes, found that exercise stimulated the pancreas to produce insulin and helped the body to use the hormone more effectively.

Writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the researchers from University of South Carolina say that the findings suggest that "the potential for prevention of related chronic diseases, including non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease, may be considerable".

Elizabeth Mayer-Davies, who led the research, says that the evidence suggests that treatments could be designed to include walking, which is inexpensive and accessible to large numbers of people.

A spokesman for the British Diabetic Association said: "We would advise anyone with diabetes to adopt a healthy lifestyle because it has been shown to be beneficial as far as their condition is concerned. This would include both a healthy diet and adequate exercise."

Pet quarantine laws 'increase rabies danger'

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S strict quarantine laws, far from providing protection against rabies, are increasing the likelihood of the disease entering the country, a new pressure group says.

The current regulations, which require all imported dogs and cats to be held in solitary confinement for six months, encourages the smuggling of pets into Britain, according to the Quarantine Reform Campaign.

The campaign group is made up of the RSPCA, Vets for Change, a reform faction within the British Veterinary Association, and Passports for Pets, representing people who want to be able to travel abroad with their animals.

John Rolfe, of the RSPCA, said: "There are good reasons to believe that quarantine alone does not provide an effective safeguard against rabies and the report we are releasing today highlights our many concerns about the existing system."

The campaign's report, *The Case for Change*, recommends that quarantine should

be replaced by a system based on vaccination, blood tests (to make sure the vaccine has taken) and microchip identification for pets imported from the EU and other countries classified as rabies-free.

This is one of the options being looked at by an independent panel of scientific experts set up last autumn by Jack Cunningham, the Minister of Agriculture. It is expected to report to the Government before the summer.

Mr Rolfe, the RSPCA's director of communications, said the expense of quarantine (around £800 for a cat and £1,500 for a dog), and the desire to avoid condemning their pets to six months' imprisonment, was a powerful incentive for people to smuggle animals into Britain. "In the past seven years there have been 769 cases of animals being smuggled into this country," he said. "Those are just the cases we know about. The real figure is probably much higher."

According to the report, there has not been a single, scientifically proven case of rabies in any of the 200,000 cats and dogs imported into the Britain since 1970, when vaccination of animals entering quarantine was made compulsory.

Lord Soulsby of Swaffham, a past president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, said that the fox strain of rabies still found in some parts of the EU did not pose a significant risk. "The transmissibility of fox rabies to dogs is very low, and the chance of fox rabies being introduced into this country by a dog is virtually zero."



Lord Soulsby: fox rabies not a significant risk

Prisoner escapes as family storms mother's hospital

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A VIOLENT prisoner was on the run yesterday after 30 relatives overpowered guards while he visited his dying mother in hospital.

Richard McCarthy, 30, escaped shortly after arriving at the hospital on a compassionate visit. Two prison officers accompanying him were surrounded in a corridor outside his mother's ward at Frenchay Hospital, Bristol.

They were intimidated into removing a handcuff linking the prisoner to one of the officers. They tried to chase McCarthy as he fled, but were constantly surrounded by his family and friends.

It is understood that up to 200 friends and associates of McCarthy were in the vicinity of the hospital. He fled from the grounds and has not been seen since the escape.

Last month, a Prison Service spokesman said: "This was a very serious incident." "The reports were that these people virtually overran the hospital. The officers had him handcuffed, but they were forced by a large number of people also visiting the lady in hospital to remove the cuffs. The officers were then obstructed while he made good his escape."

McCarthy, a traveller, was serving three years for a violent attack in a public house in Bristol. The officers had brought him from Weymouth jail in Norfolk after he had made a special request to see his mother. McCarthy had been handcuffed to an officer throughout the journey.

His mother died the day after his visit on February 20 and the funeral service took place in Essex. The Prison Service spokesman said: "Prisoners can apply to visit dying relatives in hospital, provided they are close blood relatives. They can either be released unescorted or under escort."

Avon and Somerset police said that they had received no confirmed sighting of McCarthy, who tended to move around the country, living with other travellers on caravans.

A spokesman said: "We are making inquiries into the nature of this escape." The force was investigating whether anyone should be charged in connection with the incident. Anyone found guilty of helping a prisoner to escape faces a maximum of ten years in jail.

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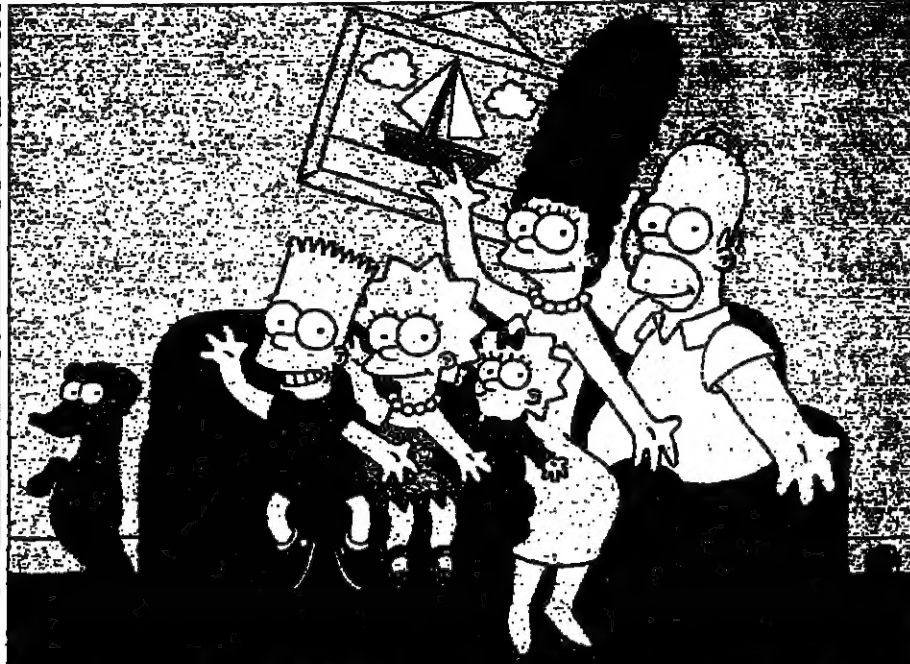
Children find violent cartoons a turn-off

By CAROL MIDDLEY
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

CHILDREN are switching off modern action cartoons in favour of the old-fashioned classics watched by their parents. According to research by the Independent Television Commission, they enjoy 1970s favourites such as *Scooby Doo* and *Wacky Races* far more than the latest offerings influenced by computer and video games.

Parents' fears that their children are becoming addicted to violent, all-action animations such as *Street Sharks*, *X-Men* and *Men in Black* are groundless, says a report by the commission. When asked to name their favourite programmes, virtually none mentioned a cartoon. Most preferred factual programmes and drama; if they watched cartoons they wanted the slapstick of *Tom and Jerry*. The adventures of the cowardly dog *Scooby Doo* and the dysfunctional *Simpsons* were also great favourites.

"Darker" animations, with more complex and sinister storylines, succeeded only in boring children rather than frightening them. Only a



The report says children are not overly keen on cartoons. When they watch, they prefer those such as *Scooby Doo*, left, *The Simpsons*, centre, and *The Flintstones*

narrow band of boys aged five to seven enjoyed watching the action cartoons.

Children categorised such cartoons (*Reboot*, *Batman and Robin*) as "bad scary", while "good scary" animations included *Hey Arnold!*.

The Flintstones and *Ragrats* — programmes they went out of their way to watch.

"This research shows children can be as discerning in their viewing as adults," Peter Rogers, chief executive of the commission, said.

"Television is one of their main sources of entertainment and they want good choice, not just cartoons. Programme makers ignore this at their peril."

Sixty children aged between five and nine, and their

mothers, were surveyed for the study. Sue Chambers, one of the authors, said some of the mothers were shocked by the aggressive programmes their children were watching. However, even though some of the children found them

disturbing, they realised they were simply cartoons.

"Cartoons are an important part of children's viewing because they are short and easy to dip in and out of," she said. "They're more relaxing than challenging to

watch, but they are not the only part of their TV diet. Factual and drama programmes such as *Art Attack* and *The Demon Headmaster* are more popular than any cartoons."

The latest viewing figures

show that there are few cartoons in the children's top ten. ITV's *Art Attack* was the most watched, followed by *Pudge and Wild House*. None of these is a cartoon.

"Girls in general and older boys do not particularly like action cartoons," the report says. "Younger girls (5-6) find some of the imagery 'scary', with ugly characters and monsters, and think they are noisy with loud music and too much fighting. Older boys and girls (8-9) sometimes feel uncomfortable or uneasy if the characters are too human or if the storylines are to do with children being in danger."

The commission published a further report yesterday that suggested young children can be disturbed by "morphing" images used in advertising. The computer technique, which transforms people into creatures, has been used in adverts by Peugeot and Iri Bru.

Frank Willis, the commission's director of advertising and sponsorship, said advertisers had been warned about using the technique. His comments were part of a report into the influence of advertising on children.

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Internet 'lock' will screen out pornography

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A CINEMA-STYLE classification is being drawn up for the Internet to help parents to filter out violent, pornographic and other unsavoury material. The scheme, backed by the Government, has been taken up by the European Commission and ratings bodies in the United States and Australia. It is expected to be available to parents across the globe in two years.

Experts say it will be a more sophisticated version of the U to 18 ratings system at cinemas. Mark Stephens, chairman of the Internet Watch Foundation's policy board, which drew up the proposals, said yesterday that people or organisations publishing information over the Internet would attach electronic tags indicating the level of violence and sexual imagery the text and pictures contained.

Parents would be able to obtain free filtering software for home PCs and set limits to the information that could be downloaded when a child was logged on. The software would check the electronic tag and either reject or accept the information being offered during a search of the Internet.

Peddlers of hardcore computer pornography are unlikely to attach electronic tags. But Mr Stephens said parents would also be able to set the filter system to reject "tagless" Internet pages.

He said the sophistication of screening or filtering software was such that violent informa-

tion could be rejected without *Macbeth*, for example, being barred. In addition, adults could tailor the system to individual cultural or religious constraints.

Details of the international ratings system were disclosed by Barbara Roche, a junior Industry Minister, at a meeting in London yesterday to review the Internet Watch Foundation's first annual report.

The foundation was set up in 1996 by the British Internet industry, at the request of Government and the police, to combat illegal material, especially child pornography. It operates a hotline and encourages the public to report any potentially illegal material seen on the Net. Offensive material is then removed by Internet service providers and cases reported to the police and overseas authorities if the material originated outside Britain.

The foundation's report shows that up to 95 per cent of the 2,000 items removed as a result of its action contained images of children engaged in sexual activity. But the foundation acknowledges that the amount it catches is a tiny proportion of the total.

John Carr, of NCH Action for Children, a charity involved in the ratings proposals, said that existing screening services such as NetNanny were too complicated for many parents. "We are hoping the foundation will come up with a simpler and more user-friendly system."

Zoo book is a real stinker

By PAUL WILKINSON

A NEW children's book will convey the atmosphere of a zoo more pungently than a conventional picture story. Rubbing the illustrations in *Smelly Zoo* will release four impregnated smells: the elephant house, the canteen, feeding time with the seals and the distinctive odour of the main character, Jack, described by the printers as "a rather stinky smell".

The 16-page book is one of two by Lynne Gibbs, to be published in June, that will include long-lasting, strong smells made possible by new techniques. Unlike earlier "scratch and sniff" books, children will be able to rub a whole page and sniff the odours time after time.

In *Smelly School*, the teacher has a pleasant perfume and children can experience the fragrance of the gardens. Less attractive are the aromas of the gym and the dining hall.

Paul Ingham, account director of Stanley Press at Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, tried samples on his eight-year-old son, Peter. "I tested everything on him, from horrible smells like sweaty feet and mothballs, through to lavender. He thought the smelly feet was horrible and really turned his nose up at that. I was only using a blank piece of paper, but if it had been a book I'm



Rubbing the pictures releases strong odours

sure he would have picked it up and read it."

Mr Ingham believes the idea, which is aimed at four to seven-year-olds, will be of educational benefit. "It makes them pay attention more."

The process involves a secret ink. The firm has adapted its printing machines and goes into production next month with a test run of 10,000 copies of each book.

To ensure the printers are not overcome by the process, an extractor fan will be used in the works — "though we may have to issue them with gas masks", Mr Ingham said. World International, the books' Cheshire-based publisher, said: "They are the most obnoxious smells you can imagine."

Children's books, page 36

Irvine defends his 'noble cause'

Lord Chancellor tells MPs he has nothing to apologise for and says £60,000 wallpaper will outlast DIY store goods, writes James Landale

A DEFIANT Lord Chancellor yesterday insisted that the £650,000 refurbishment of his official residence was a "noble cause" and dismissed any criticism as a "storm in a teacup".

Lord Irvine of Lairg told MPs that he had nothing to apologise for and said the controversy surrounding the project had been blown grossly out of proportion. He recognised that the cost might seem high but he insisted that future generations would be grateful.

In a bravura performance, Lord Irvine told the Public Administration Committee that he wanted to take "on the chin" criticism of the £60,000 being spent on Pugin-style wallpaper. The material, he said, had to last for 60 or 70 years. "We are not talking about something down at the DIY store that might collapse after a year or so."

It was the first time the Lord Chancellor was subjected to public scrutiny since *The Times* revealed the extent of his involvement in the refurbishment plans before they had been agreed by peers.

Tory MPs accused him of trying to conceal details about the refurbishment. David Ruffley, MP for Bury St Edmunds, said the leaked letter from Lord Irvine to Black Rod, the most senior official in the House of Lords, showed that earlier press releases had been "misleading and economical with the truth".

Lord Irvine insisted: "While I understand that £650,000 appears to be a large sum of money, I believe it is in a noble cause and future generations will be grateful."

He added: "I have never ever attempted, nor would I dream of attempting, to con-

ceal that this refurbishment has my strong support and approval. The residence is part of the Palace of Westminster.

"This Palace is the mother of parliaments. It is a Grade I listed building. It is clearly right that when it is refurbished, it should be refurbished to the highest possible standard. It is part of our national heritage."

He insisted that the decision to go ahead with the refurbishment was made by the House of Lords Administration and Work Sub-Committee. "It was their decision and their decision alone but I have never concealed that I thoroughly approve of what they have done. People will regard this as a storm in a teacup."

Andrew Tyrie, Tory MP for Chichester, asked if Lord Irvine felt like Norman Lamont, the former Tory Chancellor, who once said: "Je ne regrette rien."

Lord Irvine replied: "I certainly do not think any apologies are due. On the contrary, I tend to side with the commentators who have said three cheers for Parliament."

Lord Irvine quoted Baroness Thatcher who wrote in a foreword to a book in 1986 that she had been privileged to confirm the conservation of the Palace of Westminster. "It is right that if you are refurbishing part of the Palace of Westminster, it should be done to the very highest and historically authentic standard. It is right in principle."

Lord Irvine strongly defended the decision to hang publicly-owned paintings in the residence. All the curators of the national galleries were strongly in support of the move. "I see it as an opportunity for public benefit in



Taking it on the chin: Lord Irvine justifying the £650,000 refurbishment of his apartments to MPs yesterday

procuring works of art which are languishing in cellars, putting them on walls where they could be seen regularly."

After being pressed about the confidentiality clauses which contractors had been asked to sign, Lord Irvine said: "These contracts are not let by my department. They are House contracts."

He also expressed concern that some newspapers had printed "very accurate" plans of the residence. "I hope that you will find it to deprecate that on the grounds of security considerations. I have no objection to the Official Secrets Act applying to these contracts."

Mr Tyrie asked if it had ever occurred to him that the letter about the refurbishment might be politically embarrassing. Lord Irvine said it was right for the committee to have all the information be-

fore them. "There was nothing but candour and the fullest detail in that letter."

Mr Tyrie asked if Lord Irvine's officials had advised him about the letter and even written it for him. Lord Irvine replied: "No, not at all. I wrote every word myself. I take full responsibility for it. It was a subject in which I was very interested."

"But I have never concealed that I thoroughly approve of what they have done."

Mike Hancock, Liberal Democrat MP for Portsmouth South, later joked: "I would like to ask you what to avoid in B&Q [the DIY chain]. Looking confused, Lord Irvine either misheard or was unaware of B&Q and took advice from his officials before remarking: 'That was very entertaining.'"

Letters, page 19

Wallpaper makers hit back at cheap 'insult'

WALLPAPER manufacturers demanded an apology last night after Lord Irvine "insulted" their products.

The Lord Chancellor's suggestion that ordinary wallpaper — unlike the very costly reproduction Pugin stuff chosen for his residence — might fall down almost as soon as it was up drew an outraged response from the wallpaper industry.

The Wallfashion Bureau, representing the industry, said Lord Irvine's remarks were "frankly an insult". Terry Langstroth, the bureau chairman, said it was "outrageous" to suggest that the millions of rolls of paper sold through DIY stores up and

down the country were not up to the job and would collapse after a year or so.

"We would be happy to hang our commercially produced paper alongside his considerably more expensive hand-printed product any day," he said.

"These remarks by the Lord Chancellor would suggest he is completely out of touch. As an industry we produce top quality products which can cost a fraction of the price he is paying."

"Our members produce papers which can cost under £10 a roll and would last just as long — if not longer than his. We strongly recommend he tries them."

Robinson refuses to rise to Tory bait over tax

By POLLY NEWTON
POLITICAL REPORTER

GEORGE ROBINSON, the Paymaster General, brushed off a Commons attack on his financial affairs yesterday as MPs debated the Government's plans for individual savings accounts (Isas).

Mr Robinson faced a barrage of insults from the Conservatives, including an accusation that he was a tax dodger. The charge was later withdrawn by Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor, on the grounds that it was unparliamentary.

However, Mr Robinson had to suffer a series of jibes about his status as the beneficiary of a £12 million Guernsey-based

trust fund and his ownership of properties including a villa in Tuscany that has been used by the Prime Minister for family holidays. Winding up the debate for the Government, Mr Robinson dismissed the Opposition's charges as "petty and irrelevant".

Mr Lilley made his "tax dodger" comment as he opened the Tory-initiated discussion of the Government's plans to replace personal equity plans (Peps) and tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) with Isas. There will be a £50,000 limit on tax-free savings, which was announced by Mr Robinson when details of the scheme were unveiled last year.

Mr Lilley told MPs: "It was

an insult to put the tax-dodger general, with £12 million in an offshore tax haven, in charge of taking away tax relief from middle Britain." He said that Labour had broken its election pledge not to penalise people with Peps or Tessas.

"It was the Prime Minister — 'trust me Tony' himself — who said 'we want to extend the scope of Peps and Tessas' and said the idea that the Labour Party is going to take action against them is completely absurd."

He quoted from a letter written by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Alistair Darling, to the magazine *Investor's Chronicle*, before Labour came to power last May. Mr Darling, who had given an

interview to the magazine, wrote after it appeared: "The assertion in the article that Labour is examining proposals to abolish Peps and Tessas is not true."

He ridiculed the Government's claim that it would encourage millions of people to save for the first time. "The truth is that they are a phantom army. They had to be invented to pretend that tax relief was going to be spread more widely."

Michael Fallon, the Conservatives' front bench Treasury spokesman, said that Mr Robinson had described people with more than £50,000 in a pep as "people who have done extremely well". "Not as extremely well as he has done

with his £12 million offshore, all of it sheltered from tax."

Mr Darling defended the Government, saying it wanted to ensure that tax relief was fairly distributed. "The problem we have got at the

moment is that we are spending about £15 billion in tax relief on Peps and Tessas and by the year 2007 on present trends that would rise to over £2 billion, the equivalent of a penny on income tax."

Political naivety leaves both men exposed to gibes

RIDDELL
ON POLITICS

DERRY IRVINE and Geoffrey Robinson are both regarded by the Prime Minister as excellent ministers, but neither is really a politician — at least not in the conventional sense of being committed career politicians. That is why they are so vulnerable to the type of baiting and gibes they received yesterday from some Tory "booster boys".

Mr Robinson may have been an MP for more than two decades, but for much of the time he has been better known in the business world than at Westminster. To many Labour MPs, he has always been an outsider. Similarly, while Lord Irvine has been a close friend of both the late John Smith and of Tony Blair, his role has been that of a *conseiller* rather than a political player in his own right.

But it is precisely their experience in business and the law respectively that is of most value now. Not only Gordon Brown but also the Blair inner circle praise Mr Robinson's comments and suggestions on issues affecting business, such as the private finance initiative. His role is similar to that of Harold Lever as financial adviser in the Labour Government of the 1970s.

Lord Irvine has been a highly successful barrister with an impressive ability to cut through legal tangles, though not always an equal ability to suffer lesser intellects. He has already made a big contribution in coordinating the Government's constitutional reform programme, chairing a series of Cabinet committees.

Their main virtues are behind the scenes, as advisers and problem solvers. Mr Robinson has never been an assured performer, while Lord Irvine has often appeared touchy in public, and thin-skinned about criticism. One cannot imagine most members of the Cabinet, or Shadow Cabinet, getting into the sort of tangles that Mr Robinson and Lord Irvine have. They would not have had the

extensive business interests of Mr Robinson and they would have spotted the potential problems in the proposals for the expensive, and justified, redecoration of the Lord Chancellor's apartments.

The main charges against both have little reality to do with their ministerial roles. Whether or not Mr Robinson failed to declare some of his many directorships will be determined by Sir Gordon Downey, the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, but there is no evidence that these interests had the slightest impact upon his duties as an MP. This is very different from the allegations about non-declaration made against other MPs which directly concerned their parliamentary activities. The most valid criticism of Mr Robinson — made in the Commons yesterday by Peter Lilley in a powerful speech — were about his ill thought-out proposals for individual savings accounts.

Nonetheless, the recent controversies have damaged both. Mr Robinson easily brushed aside the Tory attack last night but it will still be hard for him, as a Treasury minister, to handle tax changes in the Finance Bill. He should, and probably will, be moved to the Department of Trade and Industry in an early reshuffle. Lord Irvine needs to remember that it is inadvisable for unelected ministers to throw their weight around or to compare themselves, even if jokingly, with Cardinal Wolsey. His considerable influence depends on his relationship with the Prime Minister and is better exercised in private. Yet both are likely to survive longer as ministers, and deserve to do so, than many who are now enjoying their discomfiture.

PETER RIDDELL

Ministers rule out new laws on privacy

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE Lord Chancellor yesterday ruled out new gagging orders for the press and said there were no plans for a privacy law.

Lord Irvine of Lairg suggested the present system of self-regulation by newspapers could be improved but told MPs: "I do not have a particular agenda for enhancing self-regulation. There was a mistaken proposition that I desired statutory powers. I do not envisage that. Self-regulation is for the self-regulators and the Government has no plans on privacy."

He dismissed the idea that the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law would become a backdoor privacy law. "I do not believe that newspapers will be faced with injunctions on Friday nights to interrupt their deadlines."

He also confirmed for the first time that senior ministers were actively considering the future of the House of Lords once the rights of hereditary peers were abolished.

Lord Irvine told the Commons Public Administration Committee they were considering "whether it should be a fully elected chamber, a wholly nominated chamber or something inbetween."

"We are also looking at what should be done about existing life peers," he said. He ruled out any consultation with Opposition parties on reforming the Lords until Cabinet ministers had developed future policy.

Journalist joins panel on Scots parliament

By GILLIAN HARRIS
SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE broadcaster Kirsty Wark and the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, are among the team of experts who will make the final selection for the design of the Scottish parliament, it emerged yesterday.

The panel of six will sift through more than 70 applications from architects who have entered the competition to design the building at Holyrood in Edinburgh. Forty of the submissions came from Scotland, 24 from England, and the others from abroad.

They include Alsop and Stormes, the London firm which created distinctive French regional government headquarters in Marseilles, and the Dutch firm, M de Bruijn, which designed the Dutch parliament building in The Hague.

Twelve successful applicants will be invited to outline their design plans. They will be narrowed down to three or four finalists, whose work will go on show in May. The winner will be announced in July. Building work on the parliament is expected to begin later this year.

IN PARLIAMENT

TODAY in the Commons debate on General Tassan's bill to help the project housing in green belt, Cynogwyn to Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and to Prime Minister, Gordon B. committee stage. In the Lords debate on work of charities, and on climate that millionaires is being celebrated at Glaston with on wrong conditions and in wrong year.

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Artist ends row over Holocaust memorial

Vienna: After 12 months of stubborn refusal, the British artist Rachel Whiteread has agreed that the cube of concrete she devised as a memorial to Vienna's Holocaust victims can be erected just 2ft 3in south of its planned site in the Austrian capital (Nigel Glass writes).

The memorial — *The Nameless Library* — a concrete cast of a library turned in on itself, is to be shifted slightly from its intended site in the Judenplatz or Jews' Square in order to make room for the excavation of an ancient synagogue in which Jews had martyred themselves during a 14th century pogrom.

Miss Whiteread's decision infuriates the city council, which commissioned the memorial promoted by Dr Simon Wiesenthal, the Austrian investigator of Nazi crimes, from a furious public debate.

The Jewish community particularly was divided over which monument was the more important. Some objected to the cube's appearance and effect on parking.

German Army told to forget past



A military ombudswoman has proposed methods to combat neo-Nazis and low morale, writes Roger Boyes in Bonn

GERMAN army officers should change how they present regimental tradition and stop glorifying the history of the Wehrmacht, according to a report presented to parliament yesterday.

Only a clear break with the Second World War will allow commanders to get to grips with the growing number of neo-Nazis in the barracks room, said Claire Marienfeld, the military ombudswoman, in her 60-page assessment of the mood in the army. Last year there were 177 cases of open neo-Nazi activity in the armed forces; 229 men, including two officers, were investigated on charges ranging from the singing of Third Reich songs to beating up foreigners.

Plainly, the morale of the German Army is not good. Bruised by financial cuts, it seems to be run on a shoestring: most major expenditure is going on modernising weapons technology, new air-

craft such as the Eurofighter, or re-equipment. The rest of the army is having to make do. "Obviously, the motivation of military trainees is seriously affected if only between 15 and 20 per cent of the army's tanks are fit for action," the report says.

Frau Marienfeld — who makes unannounced visits to units — was seriously concerned about shortages which had, for example, grounded 50 per cent of the aircraft of at least one squadron. Even in special crisis reaction forces — supposedly the army's cream — commanders complain of severe shortages of spare parts. Troops in Bosnia were suffering, too: nine out of 25 cross-country vehicles in one unit were broken on arrival.

Analysts say units in eastern Germany earn less than in the west. Elite crisis reaction forces are better treated than troops operating only in Germany. Tension exists between professional soldiers



A video picture of German soldiers acting out an execution in a training break last April. The incident led to an official investigation

and conscripts, who make up more than a third of the 340,000-strong army. The result, according to Frau Marienfeld, seems to be an increase not only in neo-Nazi activity, but in drug abuse and drinking. In 1993 there were 724 cases of drug use in the barracks room, last year 1,674.

Military experts talk of a much larger grey figure, especially of marijuana smokers. The report cites various examples of drunken sergeants beating men. A drunken frigate captain ordered a one of his men to stand for hours in pouring rain.

The relationship between

non-commissioned officers and conscripts has become particularly raw. One NCO ordered a soldier to do press-ups above five open knives protruding from the ground. All this is a far cry from the 1960s and 1970s when soldiers were allowed to wear hair nets to protect pony-tails.

Neo-Nazi incidents arise partly out of this financial crisis, and partly they mirror social trends. But the situation could be improved, says the ombudswoman, by officers talking more to their men. And senior commanders should make clear that there was nothing praiseworthy

about the Nazi years. Frau Marienfeld said she had visited many barracks where Nazi-era uniforms and medals were on display, or clippings from army newspapers in 1941, or old maps labelled "Greater Germany". These, she made clear, had to go — or be put in a proper historical context.



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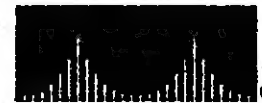
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Israel launches Mossad leaks inquiry

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

SHIN BET, Israel's internal security service, yesterday launched a formal inquiry into the embarrassing leaks about Mossad's bungled spy operation in Switzerland last month which has left many red faces and one agent in detention.

The investigation by the equivalent of MI5 was ordered by the Justice Ministry. According to the Tel Aviv daily *Haaretz*, the investigative committee will be led by Elyakim Rubenstein, the Attorney-General, and its aim will be "to uncover the sources of the leaks and bring them to justice".

The leaks to both the Israeli and foreign media are believed to have been motivated by dissatisfaction within Mossad about the performance of its former chief, Danny Yatom, who was forced to resign once the scale of the botched job in Bern became known. Earlier he had overseen a similar spy fiasco in Jordan.

Among the sources of the leaks have been a senior Mossad officer based under the European directorate in Brussels who revealed in an exclusive interview with *The Times* that the real purpose of the botched mission in Switzerland was to assassinate two businessmen plotting to smuggle chemical and biological weaponry to Hezbollah via the Balkans.

An earlier "sanitised" version had claimed that the Mossad hit team had only been involved in a bungling expedition.

The investigative team will have free reign to interrogate those suspected of passing information to journalists, *Haaretz* reported. "Anyone who had access to the information, including the Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, could be subject to questioning."

The Government's attempt at a cover-up has been attacked by leading Israeli commentators. "What would have happened if the affair was not reported?" asked Sever Plotzker in the Tel Aviv daily *Yediot Aharonot*. "Israel would have been washed by a wave of uncontrolled false rumours."

Letters, page 19



Sakakibara: accused of peddling influence

Hashimoto humbles financial mandarin

BY JOANNA PITMAN

JAPAN'S most influential financial mandarin, Eisuke Sakakibara, suffered the shame of being criticised in parliament yesterday for alleged peddling of influence. The move signalled the intention of the Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, to clamp down harder than many had expected on the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Sakakibara, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, and familiarly known as "Mr Yen" for his apparent ability to influence the yen-dollar exchange rate, has been accused by an MP of persuading a major brokerage house to compensate investment losses incurred by a friend.

The ministry's Deputy Vice-Minister, Toshiro Muto, responded to the allegation by telling a budget committee that the department had already held its own investigation and had found no wrongdoing. But Mr Hashimoto replied: "Investigations should be carried out wherever necessary in order to avoid public distrust of civil servants and to thoroughly enforce official discipline."

Mr Sakakibara, apart from being considered a key influence on Japan's foreign exchange market, is an important policymaker in international economic affairs. Financial markets will be watching for signs of Mr Hashimoto's inclination to defend or dismiss him. The yen dropped to 126 against the dollar on news of the scandal.

Mr Hashimoto owes much of his Liberal Democratic Party's strength since last October's election to promises to curb the influence of meddlesome bureaucracy. The Ministry of Finance is top of his list.

Weizman seeks second term in Knesset ballot

Jerusalem: President Weizman of Israel seeks re-election for a second term today in a secret Knesset ballot spiced by a dark-horse challenger and bitter opposition to his tenure from the widow and family of the murdered Labour Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin (Christopher Walker writes).

Although the post is largely symbolic, the President traditionally exercises strong moral influence and under Mr Weizman, the job has been used to try to bolster the flailing Middle East peace

process and promote Israel's standing abroad.

Mr Weizman, a former Spitfire pilot and Air Force commander famed as much for his sharp tongue and quick temper as for his record as a warrior and peacemaker, had anticipated an easy ride to a second five-year term. That changed last month when he learnt that he would be challenged by Moroccan-born Shaul Aisur, an obscure backbencher from Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's right-wing Likud Party.

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

□ **London:** Refugee agencies coping with an increasing number of asylum seekers from Kosovo have predicted an imminent mass migration after last weekend's violence (Victoria Fletcher writes). Last year, almost 1,000 ethnic Albanians fled to Britain from Kosovo. Other countries have been less sympathetic. Germany and Switzerland have repatriated many of the refugees.

The family of Goran Radoicic, one of four police officers killed in clashes in Kosovo, at his funeral and that of a colleague in Pancevo

Most Albanians still support Dr Rugova, even if that support is eroding daily. This UN initiative is needed to prevent chaos that, even by local standards, is likely to be particularly bloody and will almost certainly spread to Macedonia. The international community must recognise the centrality of Kosovo, and the UN must have a proper role in the Balkans.

Contested history lies at the heart of many

The scene was set for intractable ethnic conflict. Kosovo is a rich prize. Much of it is arable. Lead and silver have been mined since Roman times, and Kosovo lignite fuels big power plants.

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26



Defence Minister, said: "The whole Balkans is in danger since many countries will be obliged to be involved," in conflict.

Greece also appealed for restraint and said it was sending Theodoros Pangalos, the Foreign Minister, to Belgrade for talks. (Reuters, AFP)

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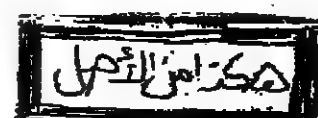
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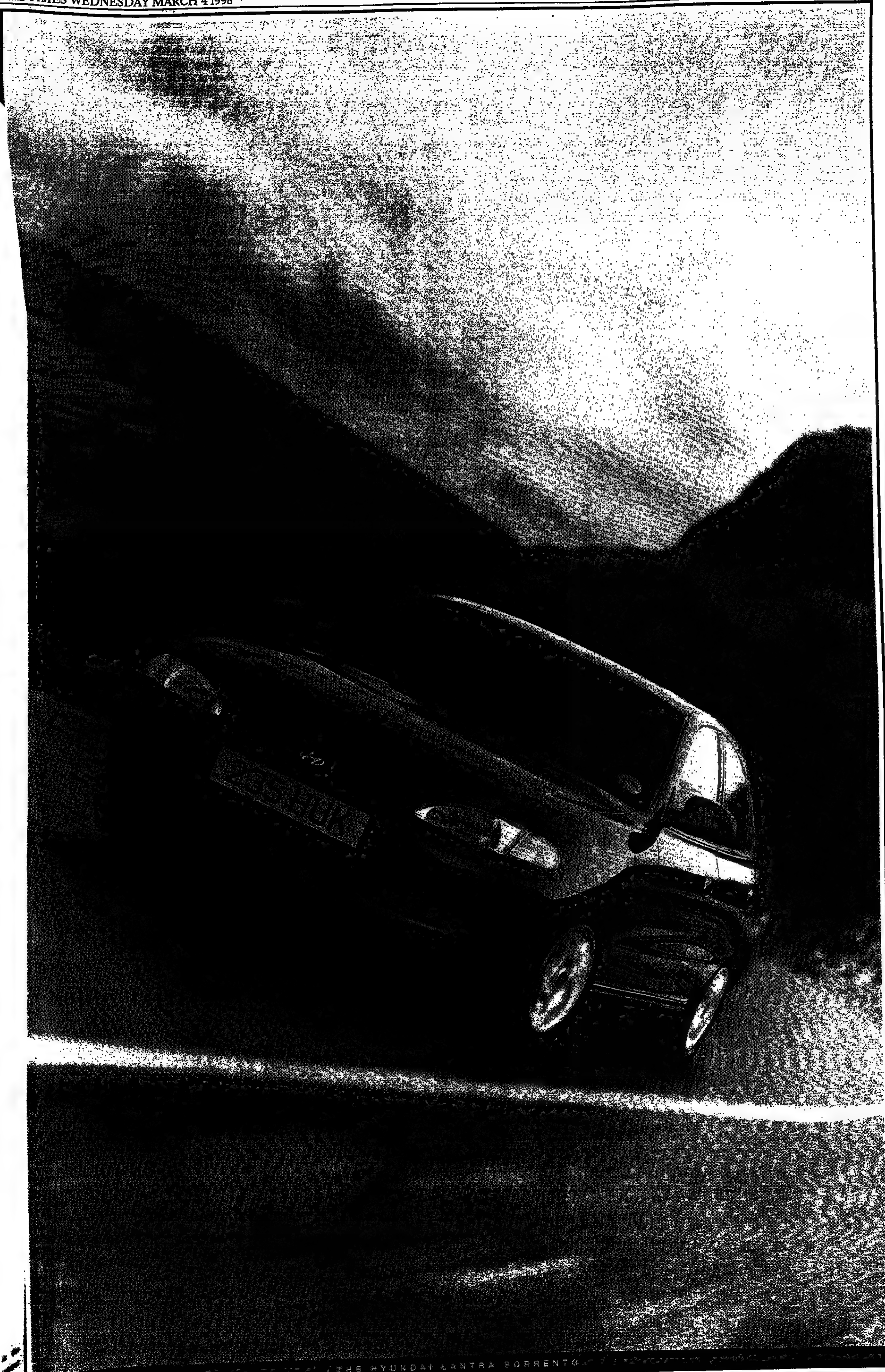
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A friend and money are soon parted

A new book claims that we value money more than friendship. Erica Wagner examines this fraught subject and below, Bill Frost describes relationships which have been ruined by conflicts over cash

She stammered at the other end of the phone. "Um, yes," Lisa said. "I suppose so... of course." Then there was a silence, thick with worry, the muffled anxiety that bodes ill for friendship. "This isn't about us, is it?" she asked softly, at last.

I'm writing an article about money and forgiveness — or the lack of it — I'd said to my good friend, whom I thought, for no particular reason other than that she was thoughtful and had seen a bit of the world, might have some interesting things to say. A new book, *The Last Art of Forgiveness*, claims that Britons place a higher value on money than on friendships and relationships. Nine out of ten people, its survey says, would turn their backs on a partner who ran off with a winning lottery ticket; eight out of ten would view the squandering of joint savings as an unpardonable sin.

Perhaps this is not surprising when the whole subject of money is so fraught, when the mere mention of it seemed to threaten a fine friendship. Of course it wasn't about us, I said to Lisa. The farthest thing from my mind. And then we laughed, but a little uneasily.

Hours later I called home to hear of an exchange of letters between members of my family breaking off relationships — between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren — for ever. You will never see us again. Good riddance. Words as hard as blows, the ugliest words. The reason? Money.

"Money is constantly trying to commodify relationships," says

James Buchanan, author of *Frozen Desire: The Psychology of Money* (Picador, £17.99). "It's neutral, it's impersonal, it has no history, and it tries to impose those characteristics on all interactions. Money enters practically every relationship, even in the closest of family bonds, and will usually disturb or distort that relationship."

The love of money is the root of all evil, St Paul wrote to St Timothy; many writers since have elaborated upon the topic. The labyrinthine plots of Dickens's novels are twisted with it: the want of it, the having of it breaks families and friendships; the golden current flows through the work of Henry James. Long before Martin Amis's novel *Money* (and long before money drove Amis from one agent to another and separated him from his snooker partner Julian Barnes) Edward Butler-Lyon, renowned in his day, used the title for his 1840 play. Perhaps because writing is notoriously ungenerous

active, authors are particularly obsessed by the topic. Obsession is bred of secrecy; secrecy surrounds money, builds a high wall so that the hand of friendship cannot reach over. "You'd sleep with someone before you'd tell them your salary," another friend says to me, and I reckon she's right. "What do you earn?" is a sure-fire conversation stopper.

In the past few months my husband has given up his job to train for a new career. The whispered advice of friends made us enter the single-salaried state (even worse, the salary the woman's) with upmost caution, afraid that the loss of that monthly



Unforgivable: The mere mention of money it seems, can threaten a strong and fine relationship

cheque would result in spiritual imbalance, a loss of worth made evident in more than pounds and pence.

Joanna — her partner has changed his career too — agrees. "People are mystified. It doesn't square with their expectations of how life should be. They will be very oblique. 'You must be very understanding,' they say. It's horrible."

You might not talk about what you earn, but you'll probably show it. What pays for the mobile phone, the new computer, the children's toys? Who pays? Does it matter? Clearly it

does — more than most things. "Money carries with it the prestige of mathematics," Buchanan says. "It seems to be an exact measure, and worth more than just a judgment. To say that a tennis player earns so much is of more value than to say he is a wonderful tennis player."

To be poor is to be worthless nowadays, and I don't see that changing in the near future. It seems no wonder that forgiveness, that most pliant of virtues, fails to stand up against such a rigid measure of worth.

Once, in my presence, a restaurant

bill for not a great sum was passed around a table. It landed, by the lights of all concerned, in the wrong hands. It was the last event in a long train of events (a train whose carriages, locked and barred, were stuffed with cash); the credit card handed to the waiter cut the friendship like a knife. Forgiveness was sought but never achieved; wounds healed but did not cease to ache. I find the results of this study far too easy to believe.

● *The Last Art of Forgiveness* by Christopher Arnold (Plough Publishing House, £7.99)

The spirit is willing but the flesh is tasty

There is something particularly delicious about the revelation that some 50 per cent of the nation's vegetarians are meat eaters on the sly, the Vegetarian Society's denial notwithstanding. Just as we relish the vicar's adultery, so we love evidence of the fall from much-hyped grace of the morally strong.

I am not sure, however, tempting though it is, that this is a fair way of looking at it. Vegetarians do not share one uniform identity any more than I am joined, by character or outlook, to other meat eaters by virtue of the fact that we do eat meat. And just as Orthodox Jews are more

for one group of recidivist vegetarians — those who fall for a bacon sandwich. When I once had a period of not eating meat (I can't remember why I did now) what I missed the most, and knew I couldn't live without, were bacon and sausages.

I suspect we would show greater kindness in the face of all these displays of lapsed vegetarianism if only vegetarians were more like Catholics in this regard. That is to say, Catholics are honest about the lure of what they seek to deny themselves: for them the moral act lies in self-deprivation. Vegetarians — of the most vocal group of them — make such a big deal of despising

Nigella Lawson



shocked by the liberal and assimilated contingent than by any form of Christian dissent, so real vegetarians must be more angered by the flaccid claims of the demi-vegetarian brigade than ever they are by any of us.

I am a meat eater and I am incensed by those who piously claim to be vegetarian and then add, as if it meant anything, that they will eat white meat and fish sometimes. If you are going to take a moral line on this one, you have blown it. And, actually, those who have nothing against wringing the necks of chickens or plunging hooks into fish really do think that they are in some way morally purer for not eating "red meat". It is all very punitive, and silly, this moral scale based on the colour of the creature's flesh.

But I have a lot of sympathy what they are purportedly giving up that they lose any claims to sympathy when it is revealed that, in fact, they just after what they deny themselves no less than the lapsed, promiscuous Catholic. In fact, by refusing to acknowledge that the denial is self-denial, they rather lose much claim to moral action, too.

It is not anti-vegetarianism that motivates me here at all. Indeed, I am not anti-vegetarian. If eating meat revolted me, I would stop eating it instantly. I would never reveal upon anyone who pressed not to eat meat to stop. What I despise are the false claims — biological, scientific, moral — that dog the veggie, self-regarding greens.

So even if I feel that many honest, committed vegetarians are shocked by this revelation of cheating meat-eating, I cannot really regret it.

Immunisation — who is alarming who?

BY NOW, several flimsy letters urging me to be wise and immunise have come and gone. When they arrive, I magnet them to the fridge, only to remove them a month or so after the date stamped eagerly on them has elapsed.

I can't pretend to have been making a medical, or rather anti-medical, stand. My apparent scorning of these directives has nothing as lofty as principle behind it. The real explanation behind my failure to respond to them is more common: mere incompetence compounded by domestic, and other, overload. I just haven't been able to get it together. And because I'm not a single mother in a tower block, no one has been chasing me up or forcing me, chastened, to the baby clinic to face an adulatory needle and my own fickle ways.

But if I have been spending the last few months, apologetically, feeling disheartened, I now feel positively relieved, positively rewarded for my inability to manage. The report in *The Lancet* of a possible link between the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine, colon disease and, more sinisterly, a new form of autism, one which causes hindbrain development

to regress, makes it hard for any parent to trip blindly down to the immunisation clinic.

You know me: I am not some anti-science freak. I believe in the messages of orthodox medicine. But I don't believe it is wrong to question that which appears suspect. The Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Jeremy Mettles, appears to be doing his best to make us feel that even to raise doubts is to be irresponsible.

How can that be? Science itself is by way of being an attempted response to the questions posed by scientists. All inquiry has to proceed from a position of doubt.

I resent, too, the implication that those who are alarmed by these findings about the possible side effects of the MMR injection are putting their children in grave danger, and all for the most trivial consideration. One can be immunised repeatedly against rubella (and boys against mumps) and, pally, is measles indeed a killer disease?

I wonder who is being the more alarmist here: those who publicise their fears about this injection, or those who depict the untold horrors that will ensue if we refuse it.

ARTS

Right-Idon for the right-on: Culture Secretary Chris Smith tells of his plans to give special-interest music groups a government leg-up — Pages 34-36

BILL FROST

When a Lottery win can spark a bitter feud

MANY OF us know at least one couple torn apart by the greed, fear and anger that only money, or the lack of it, can breed in a relationship. Almost daily, the tabloids tell of National Lottery winners turned life's losers through avarice, profligacy and betrayal.

A dream came true for Nadine Slack and her boyfriend Russell Loughlin when they scooped a £1.3 million fortune two years ago. They moved from a one-bedroomed flat to a £250,000 country cottage and embarked on the mother of all spending sprees.

And then the dream became a nightmare of acrimonious rows over money and who had really won the lottery. Nadine, pregnant at the time of the draw, chose the lucky numbers while unemployed Russell paid for the ticket.

Extravagant shopping expeditions and exotic holidays ate into the jackpot as the couple sniped and squabbled. Designer clothes were thrown out when dirty to save on washing. Although at each other's throats, they continued to squander their win before finally parting. A close friend

said: "The lottery brought nothing but misery. Their first argument was over who had won."

Nadine, 23, does not blame the win for the break-up of the relationship, though. "The Lottery did not ruin my life. He did," she says. Russell, 24, is not speaking to the press while the couple wrangle over their last £300,000. He is said to have become "a virtual recluse", rarely leaving his mother's home.

Over the weekend, details of another family's disintegration after a lottery win further underscored the point that Britons will not forgive each other after falling out over money.

Patrick Hallisey, a former rag-and-bone man from Rochdale, Greater Manchester, went public with his private grief over daughter Mary Booth's alleged unwillingness to share her £1.2 million jackpot with her brother and two sisters.

"I reared her and the family out of scrap and bits of rag," he says. "But she seems to have forgotten those days when we struggled to get enough money for food and



Nadine Slack and Russell Loughlin's £250,000 house

clothes. Mary used to be a good worker when we scraped a living but she does not want to know us now she has come into money."

Miss Booth, who quit her Post Office job after she won two weeks ago, is discussing her options with financial advisers. "Once we know how we are fixed, I will sort other people out," she said.

Julia and John's bitter parting over money is a rather

different late-20th-century cautionary tale. They split just months before their planned marriage and now communicate only through solicitors.

At the centre of the dispute is a repossessed flat in West London and estimated lost equity of £35,000. There are unpaid bills, too.

When the couple bought the property it was agreed that Julia would meet household bills and council tax while

John would be responsible for the mortgage and any spending on repairs or redecoration.

All went well for the first year or so until John's freelance graphic-design contracts dried up. However, John failed to tell his partner.

Julia, who is employed by a record company, says: "Each morning he would leave for work as usual and return at the normal time — early evening. If I needed to contact him, I rang the mobile."

While she worked, John idled away his mornings in the library and afternoons in the pub. Having given up on the search for a new job, he drank what little cash remained in his account and let the mortgage repayments slide.

This went on for quite a while until I opened a letter from the building society. My head swam and my heart was pounding — they were threatening repossession, because our arrears were so high," says Julia.

"When he came home I went ballistic — I had added up the figures and realised there was no way I could make up the money. When I called the building society I realised

that our chances of hanging on to the flat were zero."

"When he came back and I confronted him, John just stood there shuffling his feet while I screamed, and stood there while I hit him. Then I just broke down and cried."

"I kept asking him why he had not told me — perhaps we could have worked something out before the arrears had grown so serious."

"He would not answer, and just blazed that we would keep the place somehow, something would turn up. There and then I lost all love and respect for him — how could he have betrayed me?"

John, still unemployed and missing Julia "madly", is ashamed of his behaviour but cannot explain how he allowed their home to be repossessed. "I could not admit I was no longer a breadwinner. I believed Julia would think less of me."

"I see that it was crazy now. I have lost her and lost our home. When I do get a job though, I will make it up to Julia, whether she wants me back or not."

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The childcare dilemma

The best piece of advice I ever received about motherhood was that the person who looked after my child while I was working should be the second most important adult in my life. Since I am a single parent, however, my childminder, as pair or nanny, was actually the most important adult in my life for 12 years, until my daughter went to boarding school.

Raising the status of childminders was not a fashionable concept where we lived. "No wonder your nannies never want to leave. You're nice to them," sneered one of my friends. However, it worked. I kept my promises, worked around their English lessons, gave them responsibility and space, didn't exploit them, listened to their problems and, on one occasion, stood bail for one of their boyfriends. It was easier when I became my own boss and could devise my own working week.

Life wasn't all paeia and pavlovas — our astrophysically sophisticated nanny preferred to wait for a moon-in-Virgo day to tidy up the toys, and one of the Swiss au pairs pranged the car, but on the whole they were great girls, our experience of childcare was terrifically positive and we're still sending Christ-

mas cards. If I had fully understood the cost, however, it might have deterred me from ever becoming a parent. Twelve years of good childcare cost £61,890. I certainly wasn't paying top dollar, and that figure included subsistence but not the cost of housing once I was earning enough to afford live-in help.

For the first five years my annual income was £20,000 or less. I was spending as much on my childminder as the mortgage. In that period the cost in lifestyle was also punitive; I didn't go out, a lot of friends disappeared. I had no dates with men. Since I adored my daughter, I considered it all well lost for her sake.

The only thing I really resent is the tax I paid on £61,890. That injustice often made me feel that I might as well have given up and lived on benefit. So why didn't I do it? Because I valued both my child and my work that much.

Penty of people solve the problem with the same dedication and sacrifice without sinking £60,000 into their ability to work. My neighbours operated the traditional working-class model. The mother worked part-time, which allowed her to take her daughter to and from school. Her husband was a full-time electrician, and his sister and



The Louise Woodward case, reopening on Friday, reminds every working mother of her daily juggling act. In the first of a two-day series, Celia Brayfield calls for society to make childcare a priority, and Sally Morris talks to a model about motherhood

brother-in-law lived close by, all four adults arranged to take their holidays and days off serially in the school holidays to care for the children.

Each family got one week off together in a year. The system worked, but it required the co-operation of two stable couples who were all in stable employment, now a rare combination.

It's easy to get childcare right once you accept that you can't have a life as well as children. Since self-sacrifice is now considered psychologically sick and not at all cool, it's no surprise that women now put off having children as long as

possible. What I find tragic is society's refusal to accept the importance of childcarers. There has been an official refusal to admit that for every two parents in full-time work, another person must be working to take care of their children, and that person is at least as entitled as the parents to respect and employment rights.

Employers have never been bothered about who looks after the employees of the future. They fed entitled to 16-hour days from temporary or non-contract workers too terrified of being fired to fight for time for their families.

Large companies may, grudgingly, turn over some dead space to a crèche if they are having trouble recruiting female staff, but they resist utterly the idea that they have any joint responsibility for their workers' families.

Governments have always been more tax-orientated than child-orientated. The state persists in seeing childcare as a luxury which only privileged families will enjoy rather than a necessity for the welfare of all our future citizens.

As a result, the peak time for burglary is just after the schools come out, and middle-class childcare is probably the biggest black market in Britain and America. Remember the struggles of the Clinton Administration to recruit a high-flying female statesman who had never paid her nanny in cash?

Feminism should have cracked it, but instead childcare was where feminist theory ran aground. I have a hilarious memory of leaving a Chelsea consciousness-raising group when they started to discuss whether it was oppressing a sister to employ an au pair. I left then because the debate was getting nowhere: I was years away from motherhood and the issue meant nothing to me.

Now I can appreciate that this question is crucial and has never been

resolved. Ultimately, feminism agreed with capitalism that whoever raised the children, it was still a low-paid, low-status non-job.

Feminists were so focused on getting women equal rights to education and opportunity that all mothers and childcarers ended up with was the equal right to be despised. Only briefly and half-heartedly did feminism try to persuade society that nurturing children is an important and valuable profession.

Childcare is an issue that we would really like to ignore. We see it as more "boring" — meaning insoluble — than Northern Ireland. Perhaps the present Government has got the message that looking after the children is not only the most vital aspect of keeping a parent in work, but also the most important factor in raising the next generation of good citizens.

At least there is now a national childcare policy in development, but what is needed is a major shift in our social value system. Plus extraordinary quantities of vision and common sense to make up for the fact that we've all been in denial here since the Industrial Revolution.

'I had a romantic notion about us having a baby'

Betti Romani has been a successful model since she was 15. Not in the Naomi Campbell league perhaps, but she has earned good money from prestigious jobs, flying around the world, with the freedom to drop everything to accept work whenever and wherever it was offered. But now Betti, 26, has a baby, Arianna, who at five months is still breastfeeding and sleeping in her parents' bed.

Betti and her partner, Sebastian Vince, a film advertising copywriter, have been together for two years. Physically and temperamentally, they complement each other. Betti — tall, Italian, with thick dark curls, pipe-cleaner legs and fine cheekbones — is expressive and emotional; Sebastian — 27, smaller, fair — is calm and articulate. Their mutual attraction is tangible.

They knew they wanted a child within a few months of living together. Betti could see herself as a mother of four, confidently nurturing a brood of happy infants. That was before Arianna. In reality, Betti, like many women, has found the early days of motherhood confusing, exhausting, lonely and frustrating, yet she is filled with a terrifying and overwhelming love indescribable to those who have not experienced parenthood.

"I felt quite relaxed about giving up work," she says. "I enjoyed the money and travelling but I was ready for a change and I had a romantic notion about us having a

baby. But it has been much harder than I imagined. She was 2½ weeks overdue and I was in labour for 36 hours, but when she was born I thought my life was just beginning.

The isolation is the worst thing. Sometimes when I'm in these four walls all day I don't know who I am. Breastfeeding takes so much out of me and makes Arianna so dependent on me. I love her and want to care for her myself but sometimes I would like time to do something on my own.

Betti and Sebastian live in a first-floor flat in North London, and although Sebastian's family live locally, they are all busy with their own lives and the couple does not rely on them for practical support. Betti's family are all in Italy and her friends in this country are childless.

"I went to the health centre to meet other mothers but we all just talked about our babies and after a while I found it a bit boring. Now I go out every day, but mainly to the park. I used to take Arianna on the Tube to meet Sebastian for lunch but I don't do that much now. He is so busy."

It is a stark contrast to the environment in which Betti grew up. Because of an extended family, her mother could work while Betti was cared for mainly by her grandmother; relatives were always around to help.

Yet Betti is still determined to bring Arianna up herself rather than going straight back to work. The couple were



Betti Romani and Sebastian Vince with their daughter, Arianna, aged five months. Sebastian had done a financial plan to see whether they could afford for Betti to stop modelling

prepared for the drop in income because Sebastian had done a financial plan to see whether they could afford for Betti to stop modelling. She finished when she was six months pregnant and has worked for just two days since the birth.

Her agency still calls her for castings, and in the early weeks she strapped the baby to her newly expanded bosom and travelled by Tube to sit in rooms full of chain-smoking Morticia Addams lookalikes, who gazed in fascination at her designer accessory.

But Betti soon became disillusioned about the possibility of modelling again. "It's almost impossible for me to work. The agency doesn't like me to take her and I don't have anywhere I can leave her, so I don't do it."

"I sort of enjoyed it on the days I did work; it was nice to be out on my own, but my

mind was on the baby all the time. And I was so tired because Arianna had been waking up for feeding in the night and I had to be up at six, with dark shadows under my eyes. Sebastian took time off work to look after her but it took me so much time to explain where everything was and what needed doing that I worried I had forgotten to tell him something. It almost wasn't worth it."

Her return to modelling was not without its compensations, however. Like many fathers before him, Sebastian's introduction to the daily grind of parenthood brought a Damascus revelation: it is hard, it is dirty, and it makes running an office look like child's play.

"I couldn't keep anything together except looking after Arianna," says Sebastian. "When Betti came home the

place was a tip. There were nappies everywhere. I hadn't managed to wash up and I didn't know where the time had gone."

"I used to think Betti was at home having fun, fulfilling all her natural maternal instincts, while I had all the stress of working in an office to support my family. But I realise now how Betti's life has changed and how hard it is for her. I've always done the cooking but I've now insisted that we get a cleaning lady in to help. But the emotional side is harder."

Betti and Sebastian agreed to be filmed for a BBC2 Education series, *Having It All*, which follows various couples as they approach and experience childbirth and its aftermath. The other three women in the episode have all returned to work for various reasons, financial and emotional, and Betti accepts that she may go back part-time if

she can find a system of childcare that she trusts. You sense that for Betti, with her background of extended family help, that will be a difficult transition.

"Despite the problems, I am very happy now and there has never been a moment when I have thought I would like to be single or childless again," says Betti. "My role is to be at home at the moment but sometimes I would just like the option to do something else, just the choice. I suppose I just want to have my cake and eat it."

She smiles her glorious cover girl smile and clamps a wailing Arianna firmly back to her breast.

SALLY MORRIS

● Having It All starts with Late Arrivals on BBC2 on Tuesday, March 12. Betti, Sebastian and Arianna appear in You, Me and the Baby on Thursday, March 12, at 9.30pm

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Dictatorship of the concordat

Michael Ancram on the muzzling of the legislature by the executive

The concordat, despite its friendly name, is a shadowy and sinister animal. It has suddenly appeared, not in statute where Parliament might examine its physiology and temperament, but in ministerial speeches, trumpeted as a simple means of resolving anomalies arising out of constitutional reform.

Important questions remain unanswered. Are these concordats intended to be a new constitutional mechanism or are they just another manifestation of the abuse of new-found executive power?

A concordat, we are assured, will pre-empt bitter inward investment disputes between Scotland, Wales and England. Backroom deals will apparently be struck between the DTI, the Scottish executive and Welsh assembly — and, possibly, the regions of England — regulating vital commercial practices, all without reference to Parliament. A concordat will also fulfil White Paper pledges that Scottish administration and Welsh executive committee members will enjoy direct participation, and sometimes even lead, UK delegations to the European Union Council of Ministers. Concordats may even be invoked to regulate financial resources for the component parts of the United Kingdom, even though such allocations are voted by Parliament.

We know little about these concordats other than that some are apparently already in draft, many are in existence, and all are beyond the control of the House of Commons. We are informed that they will not be legally binding, enforceable or subject to parliamentary scrutiny. In practice, they will probably be limited to the lifetime of a government. They will almost certainly be unilaterally revocable, and thus, in terms of reliance, worth little. Yet they are presented as a powerful government tool.

These non-statutory concordats are anything but a secure base upon which to construct balanced constitutional reform. The important arrangements which they will cover should be achieved through primary legislation or enabled in secondary legislation. A wise and much-loved saying of the late Lord Home was that "if a man tells you his word is as good as his bond you should always take his bond". Yet here is an unclear word and no sign of a legislative bond at all.

Scotland and Wales are being asked to sign up to considerable change and risk on the basis of informal, unenforceable deals between undefined and transient parties. References to the sale of birthrights can rarely have been so apposite.

My concerns go much further than this, however. The adoption of these concordats is a further example of the Government's attempt to exercise power immune from Parliament. They will be made to appear friendly. They are anything but.

Concordats find precedent

(in principle if not detail) in the way in which the US President has historically circumvented the constitutional requirement that he secure the agreement of two-thirds of the Senate to make a treaty. Instead, the President makes "executive agreements", that is between governments, rather than countries. Between 1980 and 1985 nearly 2,000 executive agreements were made, compared with just over 100 treaties.

There could hardly be a more stark illustration of how executives can bypass legislatures. Where powers are separated, as in America, such developments are perhaps part of the evolution of their constitution. They are, however, still matters of dispute.

In Britain, where there is no division between the executive and the legislature, this is a dangerous development. Taken with the present moves in the Human Rights Bill to politicise our judiciary, and thus to bypass Parliament, concordats are an even more insidious development.

The much proclaimed concordat on regulating regional incentives aimed at inward investment will not be the product of democratic discussion, but of deals done in smoke-filled rooms. The concordats governing the provision of resources made by Westminster to the Scottish executive and the Welsh assembly will be the result of trade-offs between different levels of government behind closed doors. These will not be calculations of relative need but political bargains, often struck to buy off the threat of trouble. These potentially cynical concordats will carry within them the seeds of resentment that could break up the United Kingdom.

Most worrying of all, however, will be the concordats agreeing the roles of Wales and Scotland within the Councils of Europe. The White Papers promise direct participation in the Council of Ministers. Without parliamentary approval, the concordats will apparently permit a minister of the Scottish administration — and possibly a member of the Welsh executive committee — to participate in a United Kingdom delegation. He could speak for the United Kingdom. He could vote for the United Kingdom. But he could not answer to or be called to account by the United Kingdom, for he would hold no democratic mandate from its electorate.

In history it is often the simple and expedient constitutional device that turns out to carry the greatest oppression. In these concordats we have an instrument of which Henry VIII would have been proud. Cromwell would have taken grim satisfaction in the exercise of such power.

These concordats will undermine the sovereignty of Parliament and the sovereignty of the people. We must strive to ensure that they are stillborn.

The author is Tory spokesman on constitutional affairs.



Playing Saddam's game

The West must leave Iraq; our sanctions, ships and speeches only aid its tyrant

British policy on Iraq is slithering from senseless sabre-rattling to incoherence. Monday's United Nations Security Council resolution offered President Saddam Hussein "the severest consequences" if he does not stick to the deal agreed last week with Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, which he pointedly refused to sign himself. The resolution appeared to reinforce UN firmness in handling Saddam. It did the opposite. The British and American Governments sought "automaticity" to bomb Saddam when they choose. They failed. They are correspondingly less able to rely on the old Resolution 687 of 1991 for authority to bomb. They have emerged from the crisis weaker than before. Saddam is therefore stronger. This is ludicrous.

Saddam must this morning be contemplating a satisfying scenario that he could scarcely have imagined in 1991. Here is a tinpot tyrant who has lost a war of aggression against a neighbour. With a taste for dangerous chemicals and a lack of scruple towards friend and enemy alike, he is loathed by most of his countrymen and has no overseas allies. Yet he has conjured a vast British and American fleet off his coast, their guns spiked by his diplomats. He has Kofi Annan coming to tea. He has cowboy weapons inspectors falling out with each other as he leads them a dance round his country.

Russian and Chinese diplomats hang on his every word. French and German salesmen await his nod. The world's media are camped at his door. As long as this continues, Saddam is a hero of the Arab world. For light amusement he can now tweak the inspectors' tails at any time of his choosing, and watch pandemonium at the UN. Americans and British fight with Russians and Chinese over the who, where, why and when of bombing. Saddam has achieved the almost unthinkable. He has reopened the diplomatic Cold War.

The American and British policy of blustering threats against Iraq must be the stupidest pursued by any major power in modern times. It has achieved nothing except the boosting of Saddam's prestige and the impoverishment of the Iraqi people. The latest crisis appears not to have dismantled a single chemical weapon, assuming such weapons (rather than stockpiles) exist. An immoral policy, to bomb without military

objective, has been exchanged for an immoral retreat. There was no regional or UN support for the American and British sabre-rattling. The Annan trip to Baghdad emphasised that fact, confirming the UN's impotence in enforcing Resolution 687. Last week and this, the Foreign Office has had to oversell the Annan deal. Robin Cook claimed yesterday that Saddam had finally conceded "immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access". But to what? He conceded access in 1991. The bone of contention are the eight presidential palaces suspected of being arms dumps. The relevant paragraph of the new deal foresees only "the finalisation of procedures for presidential sites". These sites, listed in the annex, are to be the job of a "special team" with diplomats in attendance and answerable not to the UN inspectors, but to Saddam, but directly to the Secretary-General. On CNN on Monday an enraged former inspector took the UN's boss, Richard Butler, to the cleaners on this point. Mr Butler is a tough operator but he has been neutered by the Annan deal.

The reason for the overselling is plain. Today's most ardent "doves" are yesterday's most blood-thirsty "hawks". The pro-bombing lobby is trapped. One minute it is hollering like Great War recruiting sergeants. Saddam is another Hitler, threatening an imminent holocaust across the Middle East. He and his "weapons of mass destruction" must be exterminated or, in President Clinton's words, "the security of all of us" is threatened. We could not stand idly by. Though there was confusion over targeting — weapons sites or not weapons sites, palaces or not palaces, Saddam or not Saddam — the lobby agreed that bombing was the only deterrent sufficiently majestic to bring political upheaval to Iraq. The reason for the vast armada now assembled in the Gulf was, in some vague sense, the removal of Saddam. Eight weeks on, Saddam is still in

power, large as life, twice as famous and three times as ugly. The bombing lobby is now in the absurd position of having to plead his sincerity. "We have an agreement in writing," boasted Mr Cook yesterday. "Our strategy has been vindicated." If the point of force is to "add value" to diplomacy, then the diplomacy must be seen as successful. Hence the Foreign Secretary's belief that he has secured "a diplomatic solution to the confrontation". Saddam has miraculously changed his spots — or is on the brink of doing so. He has seen the virtue of the UN inspection regime.

His weapons of mass destruction will be dismantled. The opposition is rising against him. Who knows but that Saddam will, soon, form a power-sharing coalition with Kurds and Marsh Arabs and offer himself to one member-one-vote election. New Labour, new Saddam. And all thanks to the RAF.

Mr Cook believes that Saddam would be "most unwise" to ignore the lesson of the past week. True, but what lesson? I find it inconceivable that Britain and America could go back to bombing Saddam in present circumstances. The Annan deal leaves open a dozen ways in which he can delay and obfuscate, whether or not he really wishes to continue making his ghastly weapons. He can simply play cat and mouse. Every single admission of inspectors to "palaces" will be subject to negotiation. Mr Cook says that the UN resolution in no way affects Britain's freedom to bomb under Resolution 687 (1991). That thesis was flatly contradicted by the French yesterday. Britain and America asked their UN colleagues for discretion to bomb and were denied it. To claim now that they do not need permission will not wash. All hell would break loose at the UN if the bombers went in.

We are back to square one, but with the embarrassment that British forces are sitting in the Gulf, inert and in UN shackles. The fall-back defence of the present policy, that

keeping troops in place indefinitely "contains" and thus "weakens" Saddam, is mere spin-doctoring. Such containment has not worked in Iraq for seven years, any more than it works in Iran, Libya or Cuba. Nothing so bolsters a dictatorial regime as economic and military siege. Military threats backed by inadequate UN authority fuel Saddam's megalomania. Economic sanctions impoverish his people, but not so he cares. They enrich his cronies and support his power base. They make ordinary Iraqis hate the West and thank Saddam for each morsel of bread allowed them in the ration.

Tony Blair and Mr Cook must summon all their dignity and do the sensible thing, which is to bring the troops home. They must disregard the truth and declare victory and peace in our time. The troops will leave behind a man whose position was strengthened by their presence and will be further strengthened by their departure. But only for a while. The best hope for the Middle East, and for the Iraqi people, is for the West to remove its obscene impediments of aircraft carriers and missiles and economic sanctions and UN resolutions and useless threats and meaningless diplomacy. They don't work.

There was only ever one way to end "the threat of Saddam and his weapons of mass destruction" and that was to go back to war with him, properly, with real soldiers on the ground. If he really is the Hitler portrayed by Western propaganda, if Mr Clinton is right and Saddam constitutes a menace of global dimensions, then he will be beaten only by generals prepared to take their tanks to his bunker door.

Saddam is not Hitler. Nor are Britain and the United States prepared to wage total war on him. They are not fooled by their own propaganda. The past two months have presented an episode of guff, machismo and sham. Thank goodness it is over. Saddam will fall in his own time, at the hands of his own countrymen. We can best speed that process by ending trade sanctions (which are promptly evaded) and by withdrawing our troops — and the sooner, the better. For the moment, it is not Saddam's sincerity that is in question, but our own.

Simon Jenkins

Dark princes

PETER MANDELSON, political manipulator *par excellence*, is due to come face-to-face with a real-life Machiavelli. The Minister without Portfolio, oft credited with undermining Tony Blair's opponents by stealth, has been invited to "Machiavelli at 500", a seminar to mark the quincentenary of the appointment of Niccolò Machiavelli (pictured with Mandelson) as second chancellor and secretary of the Florentine Republic. Three of the arch-conspirators' descendants, including the

Concussa Beatrice Rangoni Machiavelli, president of Italy's Party Antiviva, will share the platform.

The gathering at Manchester Metropolitan University in May will mull over "the use of Machiavellian tactics in spin-doctoring". Among the papers to be discussed will be *Is Peter Mandelson worthy to be called the prince of darkness?* In recognition of the fine work carried out by Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, by Charlie Whelan, his spin-doctor, the seminar will also chew over *Nicco and Charlie: a story of two political servants and their times*.

A shadowy figure behind Mandelson says: "The invitation will be considered favourably and he will try to attend." I urge him to do so: a line from Machiavelli's work encourages me to think the minister behind Blair's throne will find the event particularly pertinent: "One has to remark that men ought either to be well treated or

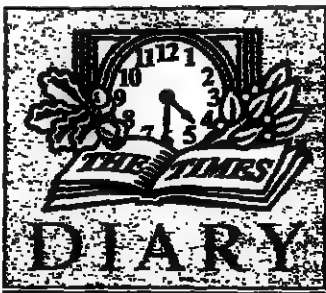


crushed, because they can avenge themselves of lighter injuries, of more serious ones they cannot."

● NOW we know why Blair gave Baroness Jay the health portfolio in the Lords. In a written reply, she declared: "Death cannot be prevented indefinitely."

Table turned

POOR Nicholas Soames. The venerable MP for Mid Sussex has dropped a scheme that saved him



thousands of pounds in tax after concerted stalking by Mark Thomas, the left-wing television comedian. Soames has avoided paying inheritance tax on family heirlooms, some passed down from Sir Winston Churchill, his grandfather, by promising to "allow the public reasonable access".

As a test, Thomas took the former Defence Minister up on his pledge and asked formally to view a £20,000 buffet. Soames responded by organising a private viewing at Christie's. The anarchic comedian then turned up with 60 friends wearing "Nicholas Soames three-tier buffet appreciation society" badges and a camera crew.

After the kerfuffle, Soames promptly withdrew the table from public view for good, citing "administrative difficulties". He has since had to pay £3,000 in tax. Thomas, who reveals all this eve-

ning on Channel 4, says: "I feel guilty that a former Tory minister and member of the Establishment might have to pay some tax."

● IF YOU come across a plastic file containing pictures of men with bouffant hair strutting about in bell-bottoms, you could be £2,000 better off. Arlene Phillips, the director of Saturday Night Fever, opening at the Palladium in May, has lost her pre-production file for the musical and is offering a reward to anyone who hands it back. "The file contained a script, some of the score, costume designs

and research about the Seventies," she tells me. I wish Phillips the best of luck, after all I wouldn't want the actor taking over from John Travolta (left) to put a foot wrong.

● NEIL HAMILTON, the disgraced, former Tory MP for Tatton, had special reason to delight in Mohamed Al Fayed's brush with the law: "Jack Straw would have to deport him if he were ever charged and found guilty."

● CASH leg-up THE aid of Dorey Russell, the beautiful ballerina (right), and

other fine dancers is being sought to campaign for a bronze statue of Dame Margot Fonteyn to be erected in Battersea Square. The Royal Academy of Dancing needs to raise £200,000 to accomplish its aim of building a permanent memorial to the former prima ballerina who died in 1991 and is remembered for her legendary partnership with Rudolf Nureyev. A large baller shoe says: "I'm sure the likes of Ms Russell will help to persuade the powers-that-be."

● BARE effrontery SNOOZING gentlemen at one of the Duke of Kent's preferred London clubs face a rude awakening: women shrieking as Chippendale types do the full monty. A strip joint is due to open next door to the Oriental Club, founded in the glory days of Empire. Though it is awaiting permission, the Volante is advertising its naughty shows in magazines. But the Oriental, where the Duke (aka Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge) likes to dine with his chums, is trying to stop the venture. I hope they reach a neighbourly compromise.

● CASH leg-up THE aid of Dorey Russell, the beautiful ballerina (right), and

other fine dancers is being sought to campaign for a bronze statue of Dame Margot Fonteyn to be erected in Battersea Square. The Royal Academy of Dancing needs to raise £200,000 to accomplish its aim of building a permanent memorial to the former prima ballerina who died in 1991 and is remembered for her legendary partnership with Rudolf Nureyev. A large baller shoe says: "I'm sure the likes of Ms Russell will help to persuade the powers-that-be."

● CASH leg-up THE aid of Dorey Russell, the beautiful ballerina (right), and



EDWARD WELSH

Chinook and the cover-up

Tom Pocock wants the Mull of Kintyre crash re-examined

This morning the House of Commons Defence Select Committee meets to hear the Minister for the Armed Forces, to repeat a familiar question and probably hear a predictable reply. It will be about the crash of the Chinook helicopter on the Mull of Kintyre in June 1994, which killed 25 of the most important intelligence officers in Northern Ireland. It was the most devastating "own goal" scored by the Armed Forces since the Second World War.

The MPs will want to know why the responsible air marshals overruled their own court of inquiry to find the helicopter's two pilots guilty of "gross negligence". This brutal verdict flew in the face of the RAF's own regulation which states that deceased aircrew should not be blamed for negligence without conclusive evidence and there was none. This was no ordinary aircrew: the captain, Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Tupper, commanded the Special Forces Flight in Northern Ireland, which operates secretly at night and almost at ground level; his co-pilot, Flight Lieutenant Rick Cook, was also regarded as being in the top 5 per cent of all RAF pilots.

Later a Fatal Accident Inquiry in Scotland found that no blame could be attached to the pilots, yet the air marshals persisted. Why did they subject the bereaved families of the two young officers to this savage and unsubstantiated verdict?

If the Ministry of Defence runs true to form, it will trot out a familiar reply. The pilots chose the wrong course and rate of climb and, instead of turning, or climbing away from the great headland, flew into low cloud and slap into the hillside. As other pilots see it, they stand accused of committing suicide and murdering their passengers.

Will the Defence Committee accept this? They may not want to spend time on an old accident when there are more important matters to worry about. There are politicians, civil servants and air marshals who want to silence the nagging voices.

They will not be able to do so. Banquets, ghostly yet still, hover by their Whitehall desks. As the realisation grows that an injustice has been done, more minds are being changed. Four former Defence Ministers, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, James Arbuthnot and Sir Jeremy Huxley have all been urged that the case should be reopened and Lord Glimour, this begun, at ask questions. All parties are involved, notably Martin O'Neill for Labour, Robert Key for the Tories and Menzies Campbell for the Liberal Democrats. Lord Chalfont has rallied support in the Lords.

They, too, have been met with the stock reply, or by silence. But now some of those involved with events and decisions leading up to those terrible seconds over the Scottish hills are stepping forward. Two of them are Malcolm Perks and Robert Burke: the former, the leading authority on the FADEC computer system, which controls helicopter engines; the latter, a recently retired squadron leader and former helicopter test pilot, who probably knows more about Chinooks than anyone else. They are convinced an injustice has been done.

Squadron Leader Burke has now said that pilot error, let alone negligence, must be the least likely cause of the crash. He has suggested three other possible causes, all supported by evidence from the crash site that was available to the RAF.

One, with which Malcolm Perks agrees, is that a fault in the controlling computer could have caused the engine "runaway", a sudden surge of power that destabilised the helicopter and threw it out of control. Burke quotes the RAF's own findings in the wreckage to show that the helicopter was out of control when it crashed. The position of the rudder controls indicate that it was, indeed, it was probably yawing and vibrating so violently that the pilots would have been unable to read the control dials. Another is a fault in the helicopter's mechanics. A linking arm and spring in a package known as "the broom cupboard" might have "pulled out" and caused a jam. This was a recognised possibility and had already occurred in the Chinook that crashed. The third is the mystery of fragments of fabric, sand, twisted through the wreckage of the engine.

In 1994 the test pilots at the Boscombe Down research and development establishment had doubts about the safety of the Chinook Mark 2, the type that crashed, and which has since been modified. The suggestion is that the RAF was aware of this but, because of operational necessity, ordered that it must go into squadron service. After the crash, embarrassing questions were avoided by passing the blame squarely on the dead pilots.

So far, the air marshals have successfully funded questioning politicians and convinced ministers of both this Government and the last that their flawed case is viable. Former Conservative ministers are now having second thoughts. It is to be hoped that those sitting at the same desks will also think again.

The author's latest book, *Battle for Empire*, is published next month.



BLOODSHED IN ILLYRIA

Kosovo could reignite flames in the Balkans

The brutal assaults by Serb riot police on demonstrators in Kosovo put peace in the Balkans once again at risk. An explosion in Kosovo has always had the potential to spill over into Albania to the southwest and to fracture the fragile political balance in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, where ethnic Albanians form a large and fractious minority. Trouble there could draw in almost every actor in the southern Balkans, including Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece. No region of former Yugoslavia inspires greater anxiety in Nato. The assertion by the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, that this is an internal matter must firmly and swiftly be countered.

Serbs consider Kosovo the birthplace of their nation, but they form a small minority in the province. It was there, on the site of the Serbs' 14th-century defeat by the Ottoman Turks, that Mr Milosevic lit the fuse of Serbian ultra-nationalism a decade ago, with a populist tirade railing against the ethnic Albanians whose Illyrian ancestors were its earliest known settlers and who form 90 per cent of its current population. In 1989, he proceeded to strip Kosovo of the autonomy guaranteed under Tito's highly decentralised federal constitution of 1974, to dissolve its government and assembly and place it under martial law. These actions reawakened fears of Serb irredentism in Yugoslavia's other republics and precipitated the country's bloody dismemberment.

Throughout the fighting in Croatia and Bosnia, Kosovo was tense but relatively quiet — a tribute to the moderate Kosovar leader, Ibrahim Rugova. Elected by an overwhelming majority in 1992, in voting which Belgrade declared illegal, he has persisted, under severe provocation, in combining peaceable campaigns of civil disobedience with a search for a negotiated solution, including the restoration of political autonomy, to his people's grievances.

Mr Milosevic has preferred to maintain power by fear and arbitrary arrest,

maintaining 45,000 Serb police and paramilitary in Kosovo and countenancing no more than sporadic talks. The failure to implement the one agreement reached, on education in the Albanian language, indicates that these talks were a sop to international pressure and never intended to yield serious compromise. Serb stubbornness, mixed with repression, has hardened Kosovo support for full independence and fed support for the separatist guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army, whose attack on Serb police, Belgrade claims, provoked the weekend's punitive raids in which at least 20 villagers, including a pregnant woman, were butchered by Serb forces. Monday's demonstration by 30,000 people was suppressed with extreme brutality.

The West, which was planning further to relax the remaining sanctions on the Yugoslav federal republic, must now alter course. These sanctions still have teeth, in particular the denial of Yugoslav access to international loans. America has hinted that they could be toughened. Robin Cook has added Belgrade to his planned Bosnian itinerary this week. There is time to step up pressure for a political settlement: Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania are united, as some of them might not have been a few years ago, in anxiety to contain this crisis.

As for Mr Milosevic, despite his past record it seems more likely that undisciplined forces badly mishandled an increasingly tense situation than that he deliberately incited the violence. Contemptuous as he has often been of such considerations, a war in Kosovo would be a disastrous drain on an already crippled economy. Since few Serbs want to live in Kosovo, civil peace could yet be restored by restoring the local self-government lost in 1989, in return for international pledges not to countenance Kosovo's independence. But time is not unlimited; ethnic unrest in the Balkans could spiral, once again, out of control.

ART AT ARM'S LENGTH

Smith should resist the urge to meddle

"An enthusiastic and ambitious Minister wishes to direct the arts," wrote Lord Goodman, former chairman of the Arts Council, in his memoirs. Chris Smith, Culture Secretary, should go on to read Lord Goodman's caveat. "Between him and that direction is a large, independent body of people who rate him as a useful stimulant for finding money, respect him if he finds it in greater abundance than hitherto, but have no real use for his views on artistic matters."

Mr Smith is a cultured man. He knows his Schubert from his Schumann. Perhaps because he has views on artistic matters, though, he cannot resist intervening in areas of his department which ought to be free from ministerial meddling. In an interview on our Arts pages today, the minister calls for the Arts Council to spend more money on jazz and world music. Such exhortation may sound trivial, but it is symptomatic of an unhealthy desire to direct.

Being the minister responsible for the arts is understandably frustrating. Each night that he attends an opera, ballet, play or concert, he is regaled by "hivvies" complaining about their paltry grants. Yet all that he can do is negotiate once a year with the Treasury for a block grant to the Arts Council; it is the council that decides how the money is then distributed.

There is, however, sense in this. Politicians should respect the "arm's-length" principle, not just because it guarantees freedom from censorship. Whatever Mr Smith's knowledge of romantic poetry — for which he won his doctorate — he is no *Lorenzo de' Medici*. He is no better qualified to pick winners than are his colleagues at the

Department of Trade and Industry. Yet, perhaps because the Arts Council has been underfunded for eight months now, Mr Smith has been too often tempted to jump in and steer. It was he who announced the review of London's opera provision without even consulting the council, which had already decided to conduct a review itself. It was he who chose the new chairman of the Royal Opera House. But, as for being "a useful stimulant for finding money", he has failed to prevent the arts budget being substantially cut. If jazz is to be financed, it will be at the expense of classical music, which is already so precariously funded that one London orchestra is likely soon to fold.

Mr Smith has exhibited the same interventionist instincts with the lottery distributors. Under the Conservatives, the organisations that gave out the money to good causes were only instructed to respond to whatever requests the public made and to ensure that the money was spent on supporting the public good. Now they have been asked to be more strategic and to solicit applications. But that, of course, requires a strategy, and Mr Smith is keen to direct those strategies too.

Mr Smith's instincts may be good ones. Much of what he has proposed, both for the arts and the lottery, happens to make sense. But he is creating a precedent that may be exploited by less benign successors. And he may not even be doing himself good. The more he meddles, the more he will be blamed. The Culture Secretary will soon discover that the arm's-length principle is as good at protecting politicians from the arts as it is at protecting the arts from politicians.

CRACKS ON THE LINE

Corners cannot be cut with rail safety

Once again Railtrack is attempting to shrug off blame. The leaked letter from the Health and Safety Executive warning the company that Britain's rail network is, in some cases, "in such an extremely bad condition as to be unsafe" could hardly be more blunt. Railtrack, it suggests, is guilty of almost culpable negligence: it has on some occasions failed to carry out repairs promised after earlier incidents; it has insisted that it is spending more than ever before on maintenance, yet it is failing to use over £270 million of the money allocated; and it is not making the effort needed to ensure that deficiencies in track condition are properly identified and effectively remedied.

The letter makes shocking reading. But little appears to shock Railtrack nowadays. The company response has been lame and bland. It has repeatedly insisted that the network it inherited from British Rail was in such poor condition that it is still struggling with the backlog. The Health and Safety Executive has given notice that it will not listen to such a self-serving excuse again. At the same time Railtrack says that it is spending money as fast as it can but is unable to undertake more projects than the structure can absorb. Spokesmen maintain that it is already taking "significant steps" to that it is already taking "significant steps" to improve the track system and that there are no big differences with the safety inspectors. This is hardly credible. It has now been four years since Railtrack took over responsibility for Britain's railways, and already

two since the company was privatised. In that time the warnings about safety have grown ever more frequent: from the rail unions, whose experience cannot be simply dismissed as entrenched union interests; from independent rail experts and former BR executives; and from those who have investigated derailments and apportioned blame.

The problem, it is generally agreed, lies in the company's failure to manage its business properly. To cut costs, and following the philosophy that competition increases efficiency, Railtrack subcontracts most of its routine maintenance. The successful bidders in turn subcontract elements of the project. Virtually no-one in senior management is directly answerable for the work carried out; inspection and quality control become very difficult to enforce.

The Government is increasingly impatient with such arcane structures. Safety inspectors are already concerned by the failure of many rail managers in the 25 train operating companies to listen to safety recommendations. The attempts to cut costs and corners have led to such ludicrous proposals as recruiting passengers to act as voluntary train guards. Privatisation was a means to inject much needed capital into the 11,000-mile network; it was never a charter to exploit local or national monopolies at the expense of standards or safety. Britain's railways, when in state control, were among the safest in the world. Private stewardship should be no less exacting.

Double standards on Iraq and Israel

From Sir Cyril Townsend, Director of CAABU

Sir, Your leading article today, headed "False equivalence: Iraq and Israel are not comparable", is misleading on a number of fronts. The issue of whether the US is guilty of double standards when dealing with Iraq and Israel is not dependent on proving that there is a balance of evil between the two states. It is an issue of enforcing international law and Security Council resolutions, whatever the form of government.

The United States not only does not demand that Israel comply with these resolutions, it actively ensures that it does not have to. Arab anger might be at least assuaged if there was any kind of attempt from Washington to get Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab lands and obey international law. Those who demand that Israel should be brought to heel have not all been demanding that US aircraft carriers park themselves off Tel Aviv.

The argument that Israel is still surrounded by hostile states bristling with weapons of mass destruction is also misleading. Both Egypt and Jordan have signed peace treaties and it is Israel that has developed an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, including over 200 nuclear weapons. The military balance of power is very much in its favour.

Israel's right to exist should not come at the expense of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the continuing occupation of other countries' land, including 10 per cent of Lebanon.

Yours faithfully,
CYRIL TOWNSEND,
Director, CAABU
(Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding),
21 Collingham Road, SW5 0NU,
March 2.

From Professor Vernon Bogdanor, FBA

Sir, Menzies Campbell's letter (February 27) would be more persuasive if it were more even-handed. The Oslo accords do not impose unilateral obligations upon Israel, but obligations upon both Israel and the Palestinians.

The Palestinians, however, have yet to fulfil their commitment, undertaken at Oslo, to complete the amendment of the Palestinian National Covenant which declares, *inter alia*, that "the establishment of Israel is fundamentally null and void", and labels Zionism a "naïf" doctrine.

In addition, the Palestinians are committed, both under the Oslo accords and the Hebron protocol of January 1997, to prevent incitement and hostile propaganda. Yet, since the signature of the protocol, Israel has been accused of injecting Palestinians with the AIDS virus and poisoning Palestinian food products.

It would be unrealistic to expect the Israeli Government to sign further agreements until existing Palestinian commitments have been fulfilled. By ignoring this factor, Menzies Campbell is in danger of strengthening those Israeli hardliners who argue that the negotiating process is pointless since the Palestinian Authority will never fulfil its obligations.

Incidentally, Menzies Campbell's apparent belief that Arab states will not support action against Saddam Hussein unless Israel makes further concessions is implausible. The Arab world participated in the 1991 coalition before the peace process had even begun. It is a grave error to believe that all the problems in the Middle East arise out of the Arab/Israeli conflict.

Yours faithfully,
VERNON BOGDANOR,
Brasenose College, Oxford OX1 4AJ,
February 27.

From Mr Michael Green

Sir, The "cynicism of Arab nations and their citizens" to which Mr Menzies Campbell refers is most clearly shown in their willingness to call for the enforcement of international law as long as it is not they themselves who have to submit to it. It is their cynical failure to enforce basic law and order against those who have actively disrupted the peace process which has given Israel no choice but to hold off further implementation of the Oslo accords.

Israel cannot afford to make any mistakes in respect of its security, unlike most other nations who live securely within their borders.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL GREEN,
45 Belsize Road,
Swiss Cottage, NW6 4RX,
February 27.

Gilt-edged banking?

From Mr William Harmer

Sir, I have recently received an invitation — one of many such "mailshots" — to apply for a Visa gold card.

However, this one bore an interesting difference: it was addressed simply to "The Occupier", and informed him that he had been "specially selected".

In these days of massively over-extended credit, can this really be regarded as responsible banking?

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM HARMER,
Barnfield Farm,
Hullavington, or Chippenham,
Wiltshire SN14 6DR,
March 2.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Shortage of volunteers to take help to nations in need

From the Director of Voluntary Service Overseas

Sir, In the light of VSO's falling application figures, your leading article, "Invisible Service Overseas" (February 27), suggests a number of practical ways that we could adapt our efforts to recruit new volunteers. You suggest targeting employers for "pledges" guaranteeing volunteers jobs on their return to the UK and a more flexible approach to volunteer recruitment.

These ideas are indeed central to VSO's future. Already we have agreed employee leave of absence schemes with over 80 NHS health trusts which recognise the practical professional benefits of working overseas. An innovative programme of short-term placements has also been introduced for the skilled people who are particularly hard to recruit, such as GPs and English teachers.

VSO works with employers in some of the world's poorest communities. It is the increasing demands from these employers for more volunteers that makes our recruitment shortfall figures so alarming. Clearly we need to raise our profile, but surely not at the expense of the skills and experience that have already made such a difference to the lives of people, both in developing countries and at home.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID GREEN,
Director, VSO,
317 Putney Bridge Road, SW15 2PN,
March 2.

From Dr Natalie Smith

Sir, I qualified as a doctor five years ago and am currently undergoing specialist training. I realised a long-term dream and took six months of work this year to be able to work and travel in the developing world. I then applied to various aid agencies, including VSO, the British Red Cross, and Médecins Sans Frontières. To my

great surprise, I was turned down by all of them.

The main problem seemed to be the length of time I was willing to commit — six months was not long enough. It also seems that I have now become too specialised to be a generalist, but am not advanced enough to be sent anywhere as a specialist.

I have not lost out. I leave for Africa next week, having arranged an independent schedule by myself. It is the aid agencies who have lost a willing and able volunteer.

Yours faithfully,
NATALIE SMITH,
12 Christopher Lodge,
9 Avenue Road, N6 5DL,
lidsld@btinternet.com,
March 2.

From Mr J. J. Burlison

Sir, It was sad to read that VSO support is 22 per cent down on earlier years. At the other end of the age scale, the British Executive Service Overseas (BESO), with volunteers of an average age of 38, has sufficient numbers but can always take in more. Perhaps we benefit from an age group who realised the good effects of assistance work overseas in their earlier years with VSO.

We are a smaller organisation than VSO, part-funded by the private sector, with some 3,000 volunteers registered at present. Most are retired, but all have skills and expertise which they are prepared to offer without salary to developing countries. At present we deploy about 600 volunteers annually on short-term consultancies in some 90 countries, and with increased funding this figure could rise.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BURLISON
(Executive director, British Executive Service Overseas),
164 Vauxhall Bridge Road,
London SW1V 2RB,
February 27.

From Mr Philip Congdon

Sir, The one thing the British hate is hypocrisy, probably because as a nation we are so good at it.

Perhaps Chris Patten would agree that he would be unlikely to support let alone pay someone who would endanger his interests, commercial or otherwise. Rupert Murdoch is no different.

The whole of journalism and TV presentation, including this page, is subject to the editor's knife. How that knife is used, for the better interests of the company or political correctness, or whatever, is the curse of freedom of expression. But there has to be control somewhere and, let's be honest, it may not always be for the best reasons.

I think that those worthies who have left or are considering leaving HarperCollins, should reflect on the possibility of their own hypocrisy. As an alternative, they can always, quietly, arrange for the printing of their books themselves, as I have done in the past (in addition to commercial publication). More honesty and less egotism may be the order of the day.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP CONGDON,
4 Hindle Fold Lane, Great Harwood,
Blackburn, Lancashire BB6 7PT,
March 1.

Dolphin deaths

From Miss Samantha Holliday

Sir, The arrival on the French Mediterranean coast of the bodies of 22 striped dolphins (report, February 25) illustrates the increasing pressure on this population of dolphins, which has suffered badly in recent years from disease and capture in fishing nets. For example, a viral infection that swept the Mediterranean coasts in 1990 caused many thousands of them to die.

Every year an estimated 8,000 dolphins die in the Italian driftnet fishery area alone. Many of them are members of this severely depleted population of striped dolphins, which, as reported by the International Whaling Commission in 1990 and 1995, cannot be expected to sustain such high levels of exploitation.

During the UK's presidency of the

EU this year, the British Government has pledged to get an agreement from other EU countries to ban driftnetting in Community waters. However, some countries such as Ireland (which still has a small driftnet fleet) are apparently actively blocking this ban.

The latest spate of deaths may be something of a mystery, as your report indicates. However, if we wish to conserve these animals in the Mediterranean and elsewhere, then we need to act urgently to address the threats that we do understand. Foremost amongst these are the losses caused by driftnets.

Yours sincerely,
SAMANTHA HOLLIDAY
(Fisheries campaigner),
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society,
Alexander House,
James Street West, Bath BA1 2BT,
February 25.

From Miss A. E. Healey

Sir, Should not The Vicarage and The Rectory have been disqualified in the survey of house names? These are names of function, not choice; when they cease to be occupied by the parish clergy they have to become The Old Vicarage/Rectory, or take a new name altogether. Or are people really saying "We're going to call our new house The Vicarage; it's such a lovely name?"

Yours sincerely,
A. E. HEALEY,
30 Main Street,
Gedney Dyke,
Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 0AJ,
February 26.

From Mrs Jan Rowley

Sir, A friend of mine, having purchased a house near the centre of Wolverhampton, defiantly named it "Sea-view".

Yours faithfully,
JAN ROWLEY,
117 Windmill Lane, Castlecroft,
Wolverhampton WV3 8HQ,
j.rowley@btinternet.com,
February 25.

From Mrs Sarah Prince

Sir, I am not surprised there is a lack of volunteers for VSO. By seeking only skilled workers (with appropriate paper qualifications), they are ignoring a wealth of ability and willingness among the young. People have the time and opportunity in their late teens and early twenties, along with the spirit of adventure, to give a tremendous amount of hard work and sacrifice in communities that need them.

Paper qualifications should not be the sole arbiter for volunteers: I doubt if Jon Snow had a professional teaching qualification in the 1960s when he taught English in Uganda at the age of 18.

Yours faithfully,

SARAH PRINCE,
1057 Halsey Drive,
Key West, Florida 33040,
asprince@conch.net,
February 27.

From the Director of Project Trust

Sir, You suggest in your leading article that VSO should consider recruiting from amongst young people again. Presumably you are referring to the time many years ago when I sent school leavers overseas. The developing world now asks VSO for volunteers with high qualifications. This demand cannot be fulfilled by sending school leavers.

However, there continues to be a niche for young, unqualified volunteers overseas, particularly when they are available for a full year. Project Trust has been filling this gap now for 30 years. VSO cannot use these young people, but other organisations such as ours certainly can.

Yours faithfully,
LAVINIA MACLEAN-BRISTOL,
Director, Project Trust,
156 Vauxhall Bridge Road,
London SW1V 2RB,
projecttrust@compuserve.com,
March 1.

Lord Irvine's quarters

From Lady Lucinda Lambton

Sir, Even if the actions of Lord Irvine of Lairg are the actions of a Prince rather than a people's Lord Chancellor (letters, February 25, 26), I say *hurrah* and *huzzah* for them all. By beautifying the state apartments for posterity, he is feathering — or rather handsomely gilding — the nation's nest rather than his own.

To see the Palace of Westminster is to be proud to be human, proud to be British. It symbolises democracy throughout the world.

Instead of being loathed as an imprudent Labour politician, Lord Irvine should be lauded as a patriot, preserving the architectural glories of the land. His letter to Black Rod (text, February 25) shows that he is a hero rather than a hedonist.

Incidentally, his so-called "throne" of a water closet has embraced the whole social spectrum of derrières. Both Queen Victoria and her Scots ghillie, John Brown, had the self-same models on the London and North Eastern Railway between 1865 and 1893.

Yours faithfully,
LUCINDA LAMBTON,
The Old Rectory, Hedgerley,
Buckinghamshire SL2 3UY,
March 1.

From Mr Bob Clough-Parker

Sir, Mrs Valerie Grosvenor Myer argues (letter, February 28) that the Lord Chancellor should be hailed for "patronising the arts in a magnificent style".

Surely there is a distinction between a patron of the arts who spends his own money, and Lord Irvine of Lairg, who is spending mine.

Yours faithfully,
BOB CLOUGH-PARKER,
85 Tarn Road,
Boughton, Chester CH3 5EF,
March 3.

From Mr John Hartley

Sir, A life peer, Lord Wigoder, QC (letter, February 28), concedes your right to criticise the Lord Chancellor over the proposed refurbishment of his house, and then immediately concludes that your exercising your right strengthens Lord Irvine's plans to clamp down on press freedom.

Am I alone in feeling that it's not the hereditary peers who are the problem?

Yours faithfully,
J. L. A. HARTLEY,
46 Winchester Court,
Kensington, W8 4AE,
March 1.

All the Duchess's men

From Mr Garth ap Rees

Sir, Ernest Simpson was not the first husband of Wallis Warfield (Diary, February 27). From 1916 to 1927 she was married to E. W. Spencer Jnr. She divorced him and married Simpson in 1928.

This led to the explanation at the time of the abdication that Spencer was the First Mate, Simpson, the Second Mate; Edward, the Third Mate; Cosmo Gordon Lang, the Prime; and Stanley Baldwin the Checkmate.

Yours sincerely,
GARTH AP REES,
Cranhill House, West Cranmore,
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February 28.

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OBITUARIES

PROFESSOR MARTIN HOLLIS

Professor Martin Hollis, FBA, philosopher, died from a brain tumour on February 27 aged 59. He was born on March 14, 1938.

A brilliant and prolific philosopher, Martin Hollis had been Professor at the University of East Anglia since 1982. At the heart of his work lay an abiding concern — almost an obsession — with the nature of rationality. Hollis's belief in the powers of reason was unshakable, and he was never in the least abashed by critics who complained that the strength of his commitment sometimes seemed almost unreasonable.

James Martin Hollis was educated as a scholar at Winchester College, and went on to win a classical scholarship to New College, Oxford. Before Oxford he did his National Service in the Royal Artillery. He seldom spoke about this period in his life, but it evidently left its mark, if only by turning him into a chain-smoker for many years.

At Oxford he was taught by A. J. Ayer, a philosopher for whom he always expressed the highest regard. Ayer, he would say, invariably treated even the most unpromising remarks of his students with complete respect and tried to find some truth in them. This experience too must have left its mark, for Hollis's own teaching was inspiring and encouraging in a very similar way.

After Oxford Hollis began by treading a path not unfamiliar in his family. He took the Civil Service examinations (passing out top) and in 1963 he joined the Foreign Office. But he soon decided instead on an academic career, a move less quibotic than it would be nowadays. He and his wife, Patricia, who were married in 1965, both obtained lectureships at the University of East Anglia in 1967, and there they both stayed. They quickly became prominent in the local community as well as the university, Hollis serving for ten years as a JP while Patricia joined (and later led) Norwich City Council.



Meanwhile, Hollis had begun to produce the steady stream of books that earned him such widespread recognition, making him greatly in demand as a visiting lecturer and gaining him a fellowship of the British Academy in 1990. His particular interest lay in the limitations — and, as he saw it, the paradoxes — inherent in treating rational action simply as a matter of adjusting means to ends as efficiently as possible. He first explored these issues in *Rational Economic Man* (1975), which he wrote in collaboration with Edward Nell.

His own position was laid out most fully in *The Cunning of Reason* (1987) and in the essays he collected under the title *Reason in Action* (1996). His

basic contention was that the rationality of action depends not merely on the means chosen but on the nature of the ends sought. Reason, he came to believe, is the fundamental means by which the self realises and expresses itself in the social world. He was an implacable and vocal enemy of every form of epistemological and cultural relativism.

Hollis was tirelessly interested in the application of rational choice theories to different academic disciplines. He addressed himself to the sociologists in *Models of Man* (1977), and to the theorists of international relations in the book he wrote with Professor Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (1990). In his last book,

Trust Within Reason — which has yet to be published — he turns his attention to moral and political philosophy. Here too he criticises the limitations of game theory, reaffirming his own broader conception of rationality as the only means of accommodating the values of social co-operation and mutual trust.

Somewhat Hollis also found time to write two highly successful textbooks, *An Invitation to Philosophy* (1985) and *The Philosophy of Social Science* (1994). Both displayed to the full his remarkable ability to paraphrase the essence of even the most complicated arguments, and both were written with the seemingly effortless lucidity and play of wit that characterised all his work.

Although he worked hard, Hollis was also devoted to family and domestic life. Visitors were always welcome, though the unwary were liable to be trapped by his modest assurances that he enjoyed a bit of chess (he was an extremely strong player) and by the delight he took in setting puzzles for his guests to solve. For many years he contributed a weekly column of brain teasers to *New Scientist*, eventually publishing a selection of them as a book.

To his university, Hollis gave unstinting service, acting as dean of his school and later as vice-chancellor. He disclaimed any ambitions as an administrator, but his intelligence and deeply ingrained sense of duty made him an extremely effective one. All letters and memos were immediately answered by neatly handwritten notes, and only by the faintest tones of irony did he ever convey that one might be wasting his time. In matters of business, as in everything else, he was utterly dependable.

After thirty years at the same institution there were recently signs that Hollis might be ready for a change. But it was not to be. A brain tumour, diagnosed last spring, failed to respond to treatment, and he was bedridden by the end of the year. Thereafter he was devotedly nursed by his family at home.

Hollis was a genuine stoic. He never complained about his life, which he recognised to be privileged, nor about his colleagues. He was not without intellectual aggression, but he was devoid of malice. His courtesy was invariable, and he extended it equally to everyone. Even in *extremis*, these qualities of equanimity never deserted him. A colleague who visited him shortly before he died remarked that life in universities was becoming so harassing that one was probably better off in bed. By then Hollis could no longer speak, but he was still able to give his inimitable smile.

He is survived by his wife, Baroness Hollis of Heigham, and by their two sons.

ALBERT LIPPERT

Albert Lippert, co-founder of Weight Watchers, died on February 28, aged 72. He was born in New York on April 23, 1925.

ALBERT LIPPERT was as a marketing legend, the first businessman to turn a weight problem into a billion-dollar empire. From the day in 1963 when he sat in the living room of a Long Island housewife, Jean Nidetch, and learnt the rudiments of her diet programme, he knew there was room for big profits. His instinct for marketing and his personal empathy with those struggling with their weight proved a corporate goldmine, and in 1978 he and Nidetch sold the diet business they had created for \$2.000 a year.

Since that sale the membership list at Weight Watchers has grown from 28 million members to 42 million. Last year, amid much publicity, the company signed the *Duchess of York* to promote its programme in the US.

Albert Lippert was born in New York City and earned a degree in Business Administration before serving with the US army in Europe during the Second World War. At the end of the war, he returned to New York to embark on a career in retailing, and for 12 years worked as a buyer before becoming a partner in the clothing firm George Simontoni & Co.

In 1963, after ten years of marriage had seriously expanded his waistline, Lippert heard about Jean Nidetch, a housewife who was giving classes on a diet programme that had helped her to lose weight. Together with his wife, Lippert began attending those classes, and after shed-

ding four stone, he suggested to Nidetch that they join forces and take the diet to the masses. Lippert would manage the business affairs of the programme, while Nidetch became its roving ambassador. Together they came up with the name Weight Watchers as shorthand for a weight control programme that emphasised group support and nutritional eating plans.

It was Lippert's idea to move the business out of Nidetch's living room and into locations around the city. The programme spread successfully by word of mouth, and soon Lippert was selling Weight Watchers franchises for small amounts but insisting on 10 per cent of the gross. Within ten years, franchises that had sold for \$2,000 were returning \$100,000 a year.

Once the core business was established, Lippert expanded the Weight Watchers brand to include cookbooks, videotapes and foods. Lippert took the company public in 1968 and Heinz acquired it in 1978. Tony O'Reilly, chairman of Heinz, recalled that during the buyout Lippert put more store by personal rapport and a handshake than paperwork. He said they conducted the entire Weight Watchers deal without lawyers or accountants present. In 1979 Lippert joined the board of directors of H. J. Heinz and continued to work as a consultant for Weight Watchers, particularly expanding the programme in South Africa.

His personal philanthropy included a number of US hospitals and the Ireland Fund. This year Trinity College Dublin will establish the Al and Felice Lippert Chair of Jewish Studies.

Lippert is survived by his wife Felice and two sons.

NOEL ORDMAN

Noel Ordman, port designer and administrator, died on February 25 aged 78. He was born in Dublin on October 3, 1919.

FOR nearly six years, battle raged over plans to build a third London airport at Maplin Sands in the Thames Estuary, until the project was finally cancelled in 1974. The £1 billion scheme would have created an airport to rival Heathrow and Gatwick, and a deep-water port to compete with Rotterdam as one of the main points of entry into Europe. At the centre of these plans was Noel Ordman, who was first executive director of planning at the Port of London Authority and then its deputy director-general.

Noel Ordman — known as Nahum to his family — was the son of a Jewish minister from Eastern Europe. He won a bursary which enabled him to study civil engineering at Edinburgh University, and joined the Admiralty's civil engineering department



shortly after graduation. In 1942 he was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy and posted to Lord Mountbatten's staff in Ceylon, where he stayed until 1948, working in engineering and intelligence. He joined the Port of London Authority initially as a civil engineer, but rose quickly through the organisation and was a strong advocate of modernising the way the port worked. He was behind the

scheme to relocate the operating part of London's docks from the Isle of Dogs and Rotherhithe to Tilbury in Essex. The authority spent months before the move negotiating with the unions, but in late 1969 the Tilbury opening was delayed for more than two months, due to a bitter dock strike. When opened, however, Tilbury brought containerisation to Britain, irrevocably changing the handling of freight and the landscape of many coastal ports.

By this time Ordman was a central figure in the design of the Maplin scheme, proposed in 1968. But despite the support of the Rotherhithe report, the Labour Government and its Conservative successor, the project became mired in local objections and politics.

When Labour returned to power in 1974, Anthony Crossland, who had long been sceptical of the need for Maplin, used his influence as Environment Secretary to have the scheme scrapped. The plans briefly resurfaced at the end of the 1970s and technically

remain under consideration. In 1970 Ordman became the first chairman of the Port of London's consultancy arm, which aimed to work with other dock authorities around the world. Among the ports it advised were Preston, Brisbane, the Suez Canal, Piraeus and various projects in Mexico. Ordman retired in 1979 to set up his own consultancy, continuing to work on four major port projects in Mexico. He also served on the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses.

He was for many years a first class member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, serving as its president in 1994. In November 1994 he unveiled a plaque in Westminster Abbey commemorating John Smeaton, the great Georgian engineer best known for building the Eddystone Lighthouse.

Noel Ordman was also a freeman of the City of London and a fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He is survived by his wife, Marie Louise, a son and a daughter.

JIMMY HAGAN



Jimmy Hagan, footballer and manager, died on February 27 aged 80. He was born on January 21, 1918.

A TALENTED inside-forward with a maverick streak, Jimmy Hagan dropped no clues during his playing career of the uncompromising managerial style that was to court controversy wherever he took charge. He was sacked as manager by Peterborough United and West Bromwich Albion despite achieving notable success at both, and with chairmen in England wary of his confrontational methods, he accepted a position as manager of Benfica and promptly secured further honours in Portugal.

James Hagan played for England at schoolboy level and joined Sheffield United from Derby County for £2,925 in November 1938. This was considered a lot of money for a young player, but Hagan stayed at Bramall Lane for 20 years and scored 117 league goals as the club traversed the top two divisions. Twice, in 1939 and 1953, they won promotion to division one, only to suffer relegation in 1949 and 1956.

No less a figure than Sir Stanley Matthews considered Hagan one of the best inside-forwards of a period in which England were especially well endowed. The fact that he won



Jimmy Hagan (in suit) with members of his successful Peterborough squad in 1960

just a single full cap, against Denmark in 1948, is deceptive: he also appeared in 10 wartime internationals. Despite his ability to play on either side of the centre forward, however, he was unfortunate to be a contemporary of Raich Carter, Wilf Mannion and Stan Mortensen.

He ceased playing in 1958 to take up a managerial appointment at Peterborough, then in the Midlands League. Within two years the club won election to the Football League and in 1960-61 created a record that still stands by scoring 134 goals to earn promotion to division three.

However, despite a willingness to socialise away from the game, Hagan's strict discipline and bloody-mindedness made him an unpopular figure. In October 1962, an accumulation of grievances

prompted seven players to ask for transfers. Hagan was no diplomat, and nor had he ever wasted time flattering the club's directors. He was sacked a week later even though Peterborough sat near the top of division three.

A four-year period at Albion followed a similar pattern of success tarnished by disputes. During the winter of 1963, 14 players led by the captain, Don Howe, a future England coach, went on strike because Hagan refused to allow them to wear tracksuit bottoms in training.

Albion won the League Cup in 1966, but, perversely, he met his downfall when he led them to the final again the following season. He introduced a bizarre series of tactical changes at half-time with Albion leading Crystal Palace 2-0, and was punched by one of the

players during the ensuing row in the dressing room. Palace won 3-2, and Hagan was promptly dismissed.

Benfica, who included the great striker Eusebio, turned to Hagan, now scouting for Manchester City, after failing to tempt Sir Alf Ramsey to leave his post as the England manager. Several players were physically ill after his first training session, but from 1971 to 1973 the team won three successive league titles.

Predictably enough, Hagan left after a disagreement with the club president. Afterwards, he coached in Kuwait before working for Sporting Lisbon, Boavista and a series of smaller clubs in Portugal. He returned to England five years ago.

Iris, his wife of 56 years, died in 1996. He leaves a son and a daughter.

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345 KILLED IN PLANE CRASH

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

PARIS, March 3
 Three hundred and forty five people, including the crew of 11, were killed when a DC10 aircraft of Turkish Airlines crashed at 12.35pm today, in the forest of Ermenonville, northeast of Paris, a few minutes after taking off from Orly airport. There were no survivors. The aircraft was on a regular flight from Ankara to London, by way of Paris.

Among the victims were 200 passengers, many of them British, who had been transferred to the Turkish Airlines flight as a number of British Airways flights from Paris to London had been cancelled today, because of the strike of engineers and staff at London airport.

I visited the scene of the crash, four hours later. Thousands of people were converging on the site, by car, cycle and on foot. They cluttered the roads and paths into the forest, hampering rescue

ON THIS DAY

March 4, 1974

In the worst air crash ever recorded at the time, the aircraft seemed to have been pulverised and seven bodies were later found scattered in fields no less than nine miles away.

work. But the police kept them at a safe distance from the actual site. None of the hundreds of strollers in the forest was killed by the crash, which occurred in a small sheltered valley, with a blanket of snow still on the ground, where no one had ventured. Over a stretch of 1,000 yards or so the trees had been sheered off, probably a British Airways official said, as the pilot attempted a crash landing. Only blackened stumps remained. Wreckage and mutilated human remains were strewn

over the whole area, from which smoke curled up in places. Bits of clothing and of flesh hung from some of the trees. The aircraft seemed to have been pulverised. At the end of the alley, where what was left of it must have finally come to a standstill, there were one or two barely identifiable portions of the fuselage. I tripped over a part of a turbine. That was all.

The rescue workers quickly realised that there was no rescue work to be done, and set about the gruesome task of collecting human remains. The bodies, battered and dismembered, were being put into bags, or just covered with blankets, and piled up on stretchers. They were taken to a collecting point on the edge of the valley.

In Ankara, the Turkish Minister for Communications suggested the possibility of sabotage. Air police at Orly, however, insist that all the 216 people who boarded the aircraft in Paris had been searched, while the 116 who had come from Istanbul and remained on board during the stopover.

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Halifax la

Bid war
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PHONE

THE TIMES

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De Beers looks
for more sparkle
from diamonds
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Why Chris Smith
is listening to
all that jazz
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Making a pitch
for the perfect
game of cricket
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4 1998

Halifax launches £1bn buyback as profits jump



Jon Foulds, left, and Mike Blackburn gave payout details

By CAROLINE MERRILL

HALIFAX yesterday revealed a plan to buy back £1 billion of its shares over the next year, as it announced a 15 per cent increase in profits to £1.65 billion.

Despite the increase Halifax shares fell 25p to 950p. Analysts were disappointed that the former building society had not put forward a more aggressive strategy for dealing with its £4 billion of surplus cash.

Some also felt that the bank should have paid some of the cash back to shareholders, two thirds of which are retail

investors, through a one-off special dividend.

Jon Foulds, chairman, said the company was still searching for acquisitions that were both a strategic fit and could enhance shareholder value.

He said: "We are committed to enhancing our value for our shareholders. We have, therefore, decided to purchase up to £1 billion of Halifax shares over the next 12 months as part of an ongoing capital management programme."

Halifax declined to reveal price and strategy details relating to its buyback plans. Yesterday it

spent £44 million buying 4.63 million shares at 961p.

The Halifax's share of the total mortgage market was about 19 per cent, but its share of net new lending was only 6 per cent. Mike Blackburn, chief executive, said the figure had been affected by those borrowers who had delayed redeeming their mortgages until after flotation. He said that 16 per cent, or one in five, of all new loans were still taken out with the Halifax.

Mr Blackburn claimed that competitive pressures in the mortgage market were set to

increase in future, but added:

"We are currently piloting seven-day opening, and are offering mortgages by phone."

Retail deposits also fell for the first time in the Halifax's history. Overall £615 million was switched out of the Halifax, equivalent to a reduction in total balances of 0.8 per cent. Mr Blackburn said the fall was within its expectations after the conversion.

Halifax's financial services division, which incorporated profits from Clerical Medical for the first time, showed an 180 per cent increase in pre-tax

profits to £129 million. Profits

from personal lines insurance increased only slightly, to £142 million, while profits from the Halifax's treasury division fell 15 per cent to £77 million.

The bank also said it was continuing to cut costs and was planning to close a further 67 branches during the year.

Earnings were 43.5p a share, up from 22.4p. The Halifax, which did not pay an interim dividend, declared a final dividend of 17.5p, which will be paid on May 11.

Times, page 26

BUSINESS
TODAY

STOCK MARKET		
FTSE 100	5997.7	(-12.8)
Yield	2.52%	
FTSE All share	2705.87	(-1.84)
Nickel	17188.33	(-96.01)
New York		
Dow Jones	8535.78	(-14.70)
S&P Composite	1048.50	(-1.20)

US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	100 1/8%	(101 1/8%)
Yield	6.07%	(6.02%)

LONDON MONEY		
3-mth interbank	7 1/8%	(7 1/8%)
Life long gilt	108 1/4%	(107 1/4%)

STERLING		
New York	1.8837	(1.8475)
London	1.8827	(1.8468)
DM	2.9895	(2.9872)
FF	10.4280	(10.0120)
Sfr	2.4250	(2.4118)
Yen	206.15	(205.82)
C index	105.3	(105.1)

DOLLAR		
London	1.8888	(1.8136)
DM	6.0850	(6.0820)
FF	14.687	(14.687)
Yen	125.94	(125.47)
S index	108.00	(108.1)

TOKYO		
Close	125.85	

BRAIN BSA OIL		
Brent 15-day (May)	\$14.58	(\$14.40)

LONDON		
Close	5287.08	(\$288.55)
* denotes midday trading price		

Bain becomes chairman of Post Office

NEVILLE BAIN is to be the new chairman of the Post Office. It was announced yesterday. He succeeds Sir Michael Heron, who is retiring (Christine Buckley writes).

Mr Bain, 57, will start on March 16 and will be paid £88,000 a year for a two-day week. He will also be able to earn up to 40 per cent of his salary in the executive bonus scheme. Mr Bain, who is also chairman of Hovis Robinson, resigned as chief executive of Coals Vyella last year.

The Government is currently undertaking a review of the Post Office, with a view to granting greater commercial freedom but stopping short of outright privatisation.

Commentary, page 25

Pension funds trail behind stock market

THE performance of UK pension funds lagged behind the stock market last year because managers failed to pick the right equities, according to a new survey by the WM Company (Richard Miles writes).

UK equity holdings in pension funds produced an average return of 22.6 per cent in 1997, a full percentage point behind the FTSE all-share index, which grew by 23.6 per cent over the same period. Gordon Bagot, executive director of the WM Company, said pension funds had lost out by being underweight in some of the best performing sectors, most significantly in retail banking stocks.

Target shortfall, page 24

Bid war takes Energy price to £4.45bn

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL
CORRESPONDENT

TEXAS UTILITIES launched its second bid for the Energy Group Inc. 24 hours after grabbing 13.9 per cent of its target in a market raid.

The Americans fought back with an \$400-a-share, or £4.45 billion, bid after rivals PacificCorp had raised its offer to \$20p and picked up more than 8 per cent of Energy in a raid on Monday afternoon. Texas had made an \$10p bid on Monday morning.

PacificCorp, based in Oregon, fired the first shot in the battle for Energy last year and re-opened the bidding again last month. Shares in Energy surged again yesterday, from 806p to 836p, as more than 15 per cent of the company changed hands.

Energy, which had recommended both PacificCorp's bid last month and Texas's increased offer on Monday, is now pausing before offering any further endorsements.

The vigorous fight for the Energy Group is being seen by analysts as a battle of managerial egos between the US utilities rather than a sensible pursuit of the energy business that was demerged from the Hanson conglomerate last year. One said: "Valuation arguments do not now apply. Both managements have at stake a lot of credibility."

Nigel Hawkins, of Williams de Broe, said: "This is branching outside normal criteria. We have got to the edge of an acceptable price."

Edie Nye, Texas chairman, said: "The revised offer price and these purchases not only demonstrate our commitment to acquire the Energy Group but also underline our expectation that all contents and confirmations relating to the Texas Utilities Offer and the Peabody sales will be obtained within the normal timetable for an offer in the UK."

Gaining regulatory approval is not thought to be a problem for Texas.

BMW attacks Vickers for playing poker with R-R

FROM ALAN COPPS IN GENEVA

BMW launched a scathing attack on Vickers over its handling of the sale of the Rolls-Royce car business yesterday and criticised the company for going ahead with the launch of the latest model in Geneva before a new owner had been secured.

The tense relations between the two companies were put under further strain yesterday after Bernd Pischetsrieder, the BMW chairman, expressed impatience with the way Vickers was conducting the sale, which he described as a "poker game".

Sir Colin Chandler, Vickers chairman, is believed to be seeking around £400 million for Rolls-Royce, which was formally offered for sale last year. However, with a number of possible buyers dropping out of the race, BMW is thought to have made an indicative offer of about £250 million. Yesterday, Herr Pischetsrieder, denied that BMW had offered a "niggardly" price for Rolls-Royce.

He said: "It's not true that we have made an offer. I think we will have an announcement within about four weeks. It depends upon Vickers making up their minds what they want for Rolls-Royce."

BMW, which already owns Rover, provides the V12 engine and many components for the new Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph. Herr Pischetsrieder believes the launch of the car before the company's future ownership had been decided was a mistake. But a Vickers spokeswoman rejected that view, saying: "We wanted to show this was a strong and thriving company."

Despite the fallout between Vickers and BMW, the German auto manufacturer is considered a firm favourite to acquire Rolls-Royce, with only

Volkswagen remaining as a serious rival.

The launch of the Silver Seraph, the result of a £200 million investment by Vickers over three years, appears to have put off other bidders. Yesterday, Herr Pischetsrieder repeated his warning that BMW would stop engine deliveries if Rolls-Royce was bought by a competitor.

Kurt Rippolitz, head of corporate affairs at Volkswagen, said: "At the moment we are still interested. We have been to the factory and we were very impressed. He suggested that Volkswagen could be looking at 'some form of a partnership'."

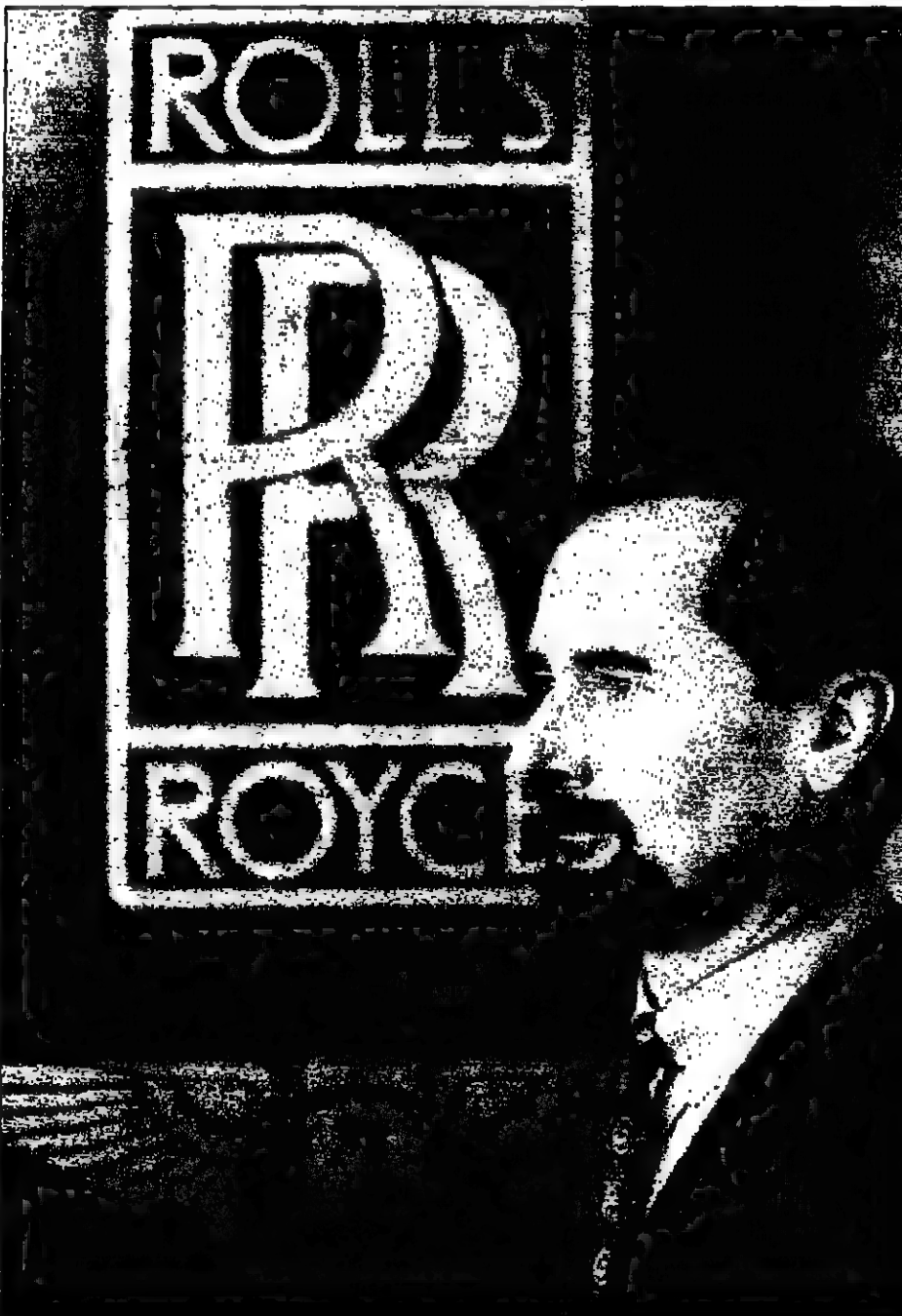
Earlier, a bid by Germany's other major carmaker, Mercedes-Benz, had been ruled out by Jurgen Schrempp, chairman of its parent company, Daimler-Benz. He said Mercedes would take a decision within the first half of this year on whether to build its own high luxury car, the Maybach, which is on show in Geneva.

The Maybach would provide the most serious competition yet for Rolls-Royce. The £155,000 Seraph has no direct competitor at the moment.

A spokesman for Toyota, whose name had also been linked to Rolls-Royce, categorically denied any involvement. The chances of the marque being sold to a consortium of enthusiastic owners are also seen as slim.

While clearly delighted with the initial reception for the Silver Seraph, Rolls-Royce executives were given nothing away. "The sale is being conducted to a timetable set by Vickers," said a spokesman.

Vickers' annual results, due today, are expected to reveal a dip in profits, with NatWest Markets seeing a fall from £83.3 million in 1996 to £61.5 million after exceptional.



Bernd Pischetsrieder, of BMW, denied that a bid had been made for Roll-Royce

PIA fines Britannic £525,000 over pensions

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE Personal Investment Authority yesterday imposed a £525,000 fine on Britannic Assurance for failures in its review of personal pension mis-selling.

This is the fourth fine from the PIA over the pensions review in as many months and it equals the record penalty imposed on London & Manchester, Britannic's smaller rival, in January. Britannic must also pay £125,000 costs.

The PIA said that a monitoring visit in January 1997 had revealed that Britannic had not followed guidance in conducting its review. The insurer, based in Birmingham, had failed to identify priority cases and its system for mailing policyholders had been incomplete and ad hoc, the PIA said.

Brian Shaw, chief executive, said the company had begun identifying priority cases before the guidelines were issued, but admitted that it had been slow to send out questionnaires to investors.

He said: "This has been one of the most complex projects we have ever had to handle. However, since the visit, we have gone to great lengths to put the breaches right and were able to meet our end-of-year deadline for resolving 90 per cent of our 7,000 priority one cases."

To date, Britannic has offered £22.5 million in compensation to 2,537 of the priority one cases. The rest have been excluded or deemed ineligible for redress. Priority one cases include those of people who took out a personal pension

with the company in preference to an employer's

scheme and who have since retired or died.

Up to 2 million people may have been mis-sold a personal pension between 1988 and 1994. Settlement could cost the pensions industry £4 billion.

Mr Shaw said he was confident Britannic would complete its remaining 7,500 cases by April, two months ahead of schedule. However, he admitted that Britannic had appealed against the PIA investigators' report so that the fine would be disclosed after it had met the first deadline.

Commentary, page 25

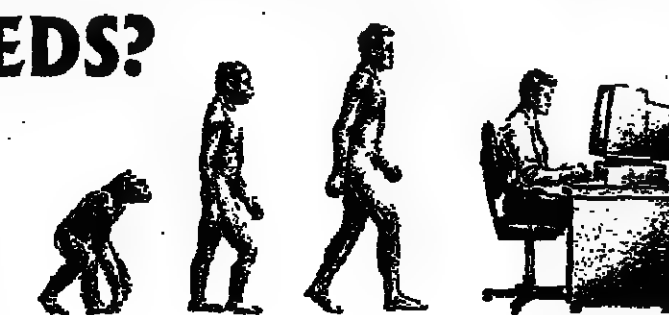
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COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

As change looks like mini-change at the Post Office, after six so-so years at Coats Viyella, Neville Bain prompted a spontaneous 5 per cent rise in its share price when he unexpectedly left the sagging textile group a year ago. But he has manifestly fulfilled the ambition he announced at the time, to collect a string of non-executive directorships and a chair. A week before that, Mr Bain had come out publicly for Tony Blair's Labour, alongside other business worthies such as Gerry Robinson of Granada.

Mr Robinson got the Arts Council. Mr Bain lands the rather less glamorous Post Office. Hard luck. His winning qualifications may have been working for a quirky owner and a long career in consumer products, at Cadbury Schweppes. It is surely not a coincidence that he will replace Sir Michael Henson, who earned his spurs in strikingly similar fashion at Unilever.

Postman Nev's job appears to be exactly the same as pre-occupied Postman Mike's five years at the helm: talking endlessly with ministers, civil servants, MPs, and consultants about how to change the PO's status. In Postman Mike's early days, a simple privatisation on the agenda. But rural Tories rebelled and Michael Heseltine was ritually humiliated by the Cabinet. Poignantly, John Roberts's predecessor as PO chief executive, Bill Cockburn, has climbed aboard the BT gravy train, via an overnight stop at WH Smith.

In opposition, Labour knew exactly what it was going to do with this last great state monopoly utility. It was to be given financial freedom to modernise, forge alliances, engage in risky projects. It was not going to be privatised but it would no longer have to hand over all its profits to a grasping Chancellor.

In government, Gordon Brown has proved the most grasping control freak anyone at the Treasury can remember. More sceptical minds have also noticed that only management and trade unions, which have between them made the Royal Mail Britain's strike capital, will benefit from a regime where they are accountable neither to shareholders nor to taxpayers, nor even to a powerful regulator.

So Margaret Beckett, at present the immediate shareholders' representative, found herself welcoming the help Mr Bain could give during the Government's current review of the Post Office. The new part-time chairman is a trained accountant and self-confessed expert on corporate governance. As a writer, he followed *Successful Management*

with the more improbable *Winning Ways Through Corporate Governance*. Mr Bain will know that for non-executives to function effectively, they need a clear brief such as enhancing shareholder value, delivering the lowest prices or the highest cash flow to the Treasury. Something woolly such as the long-term health of the corporation just will not do. Even in "the third way" business must be accountable and freedom is only a dream.

Buffett on his mettle

On Thursday, Warren Buffett takes delivery of an awful lot of silver. The man who runs Berkshire Hathaway, the American fund, is still owed 42 million ounces after his spectacularly successful attempt to corner a big position in this much neglected commodity. If the gold market often resen-

bles a Monte Carlo casino patronised by slightly faded grande dames, then silver has all the style and substance of Reno, Nevada. Unlike gold, there is no liquidity in silver, hence the gyrations in the price of the metal, and a spike in loan rates.

Mr Buffett was buying from forward sellers, speculators who expected the price to fall and sold silver that they did not own. Mr Buffett's counterparties have been scurrying about looking for silver but there are few stockpiles. Most of the silver once held by central banks has ended up as jewellery in India. Lack of interest in this commodity has meant that silver loans were once as cheap as 50 basis points but recently soared to 80 per cent, falling back to a rate close to Libor, still very expensive.

But on Friday, this trading turmoil should come to an end, perhaps to be replaced by a growing anxiety about what Mr Buffett's long-term intentions

might be. The metal has reasonable fundamental prospects. Until Mr Buffett threw his station in the ring, the expectation was that prices might slowly rise as the silver market has been in deficit for some years with total demand far exceeding mine output. India is the big consumer of silver with rising prosperity increasing the demand for jewellery, enough to soak up the stockpiles built up in the 1980s.

Asian currency jitters have clouded the picture, raising the prospect that Asian investors in need of cash might dump the metal which, like gold, is a useful store of value, a dollar proxy, for those holding depreciating bahts, ringgits and rupees. But neither Mr Buffett nor his Berkshire Hathaway investors are likely to regard inflation as the No. 1 threat. Anyone who ac-

quires 20 per cent of a market must be assumed to have secured his exit or be intending to line his mattress. With no reputation as a

short-term trader, the only conclusion is that Mr Buffett likes silver.

Stateside, they are funny about silver — remember Bunker Hunt — and Mr Buffett, like every American boy, may still own a silver dollar given to him on his birthday. Sentimentality is only a poor reason to invest if no one else shares your sentiment.

Bid battles suit investors best

Agreed bids are good for managers, hostile ones are good for shareholders. Nine months ago, the board of Energy Group agreed a 69p share offer from PacifiCorp. The American group agreed that John Devaney and other executive directors should stay on.

After the Monopolies and Mergers Commission had its say — not a lot as it turned out — Energy Group's board agreed a bid of 76p. That seemingly impressive increase was marginally less than the rise in the FTSE 100 index in the meantime.

Then came competition and a bidding battle. At the time of writing, it has lifted the bid price to 840p. That is 10 per cent above

the offer agreed four weeks ago and 21 per cent above what the board reckoned was a fair deal in June. Lucky for shareholders. Had it not been for the intervention of a third party, the bidding process would have failed to deliver shareholder value.

We cannot be sure just how much more PacifiCorp might have bid without the arrival of Texas if Mr Devaney and his colleagues had opted for a bare-knuckle fight. They can be pretty sure that they would not have been so welcome in PacifiCorp's camp after the war of words that would inevitably have ensued.

Happily, all has turned out right for Energy Group investors. Management has cannily backed both PacifiCorp and Texas at the right time, so bid competition has proved good for the board too. No wonder investors in SmithKline Beecham are biting the carpet in frustration.

You're all banned

TIME was when company directors were disqualified to protect the public, their sins being fraud or trading recklessly while insolvent. Peter Norris and Tony Hawes, the latest blackballed Barings bosses, were punished for incompetence, for failing to monitor Nick Leeson and ignoring warning signs, such as disgracefully high profits. Fair enough. But if such tests were applied rigorously, swathes of Britain's boardrooms would be emptied at a stroke.

EMU will aid Irish building, says CRH

By CARL MORTIMER
INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS EDITOR

CRH, the building materials group based in the Irish Republic, believes that the republic's participation in the first wave of European economic and monetary union will benefit the Irish construction market.

CRH's profits from activities in the republic grew 18 per cent last year, helping pre-tax profits to rise 26 per cent to 1.625 billion (€21 million).

The Irish building sector accounts for 26 per cent of CRH's trading profit, and construction output increased 12 per cent during the year, mainly because of new housing starts, which reached 38,000, a record high for the country. Industry statistics suggest another strong year in 1998.

Harry Sheridan, finance director, said that CRH is assuming a 5 per cent rise in activity. He added that Britain's decision to stay out of the first EMU wave could redirect some inward investment from Britain to Ireland.

In Britain, CRH's Keyline Builders' merchant chain is aiming for a 4 per cent return on sales in the current year. UK trading profit rose 37 per cent, to 1.620 million. On the Continent, trading profits grew 3 per cent, to 1.748 million.

There is a full-year dividend of 1.117p, up 15 per cent, from earnings per share of 1.5024p, up 19 per cent. *Tempos, page 26*

National Power to take £130m hit on coal contracts

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

SHARES of National Power fell sharply yesterday after the company said it would take a £130 million hit from the termination of so-called "coal-backed" contracts this month. The shares fell 31p to 587p after Britain's largest power generator said the adverse effect on profit margins of the new contracts would be more severe than most analysts had expected.

Shares in rival PowerGen fell 29p to 803p. ScottishPower lost 15p to 517p, and British Energy — whose

output is more guaranteed in the electricity market place — lost 7p to 442p.

The original contract, arranged by the Government five years ago, required regional electricity companies to pay more for power supplied by coal-backed power plants, a system that was meant to protect Britain's beleaguered coal mining sector.

The end of the coal-backed contracts gives the regional companies free rein to shop around for their power and

will mean a margin squeeze for National Power this year. The company said that new contracts signed with regional companies would deliver price cuts of £12 per household.

However, this reduction is not new. Under supply price controls ordered by the regulator, electricity bills are already to be cut by £24 over two years.

The squeeze on National Power's margins signals lower electricity prices across the board. It could also indicate that National Power expects higher gas costs than the market had thought.

National Power also cautioned that this year's output would slip 5 per cent because of the mild winter. The generator said international developments would be doubled. Keith Henry, chief executive, said: "Over the next two years, we plan to double our annual rate of international investment to around £600 million, and we are currently pursuing projects with a capacity of over 25,000 megawatts." The company has so far invested £1.2 billion overseas in 8,500 megawatts of capacity.

National Power said it had secured most of its coal needs for this year and next year. The company is still talking to the Government as Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster General, tries to find a future for the coal industry, once emergency contracts between RJB Mining and the generators end in June.



Keith Henry gave details of international investment

Tempos, page 26

Local press is thriving in the South

LOCAL and regional newspapers are continuing to achieve growth, at least in the south of England (Raymond Snoddy writes).

Southern Newspapers, which is based in Southampton, yesterday unveiled a 75.6 per cent increase in operating profit to £9.9 million on turnover up 25.6 per cent to £39.5 million for the six months to December.

James Seaton, chief executive, said there was no sign of the regional press running out of steam and the company was looking at growth in all its areas.

Analysts are now looking for about £19 million pre-tax profit for the full year.

Spring Ram returns to the dividend list

By ADAM JONES

SPRING RAM, one of the fallen angels of the UK stock market, is to pay its first dividend since 1995.

The kitchens, bathrooms and cabinets group, said yesterday that it had made a profit of £500,000 before tax last year, compared with a loss of £36.8 million in 1996, when trading was hit by a £12.4 million exceptional charge.

The improvement came after the sale of some non-core businesses and the closure of a factory in the kitchens division. The group also cited better cost control and margin improvements. Turnover on continuing activities dipped



Brown: new role

from £254.9 million to £232.5 million. It is Spring Ram's first profit since 1994 and the group will pay a dividend of

0.1p per share on July 6. Roger Regan, the executive chairman who has presided over its restructuring programme, also announced the appointment of Steve Brown, chief executive of the kitchen division, as group chief executive. Mr Regan may, at some stage, take on more of a part-time role.

Mr Regan said trading in the first weeks of 1998 has been strong, with orders up 17 per cent on 1997. The group's plans to sell Stag, the cabinet maker, have been abandoned, however, after the subsidiary's weak trading in the second half of 1997.

The shares, which have risen sharply recently, closed 2p down at 204p.

Loss warning prunes Mulberry

By KATHY LIPARI

SHARES in Mulberry Group, the troubled maker and retailer of luxury fashion and leather goods, fell 20p to a low of 57p yesterday after the company issued its third profit warning in less than three months.

Roger Saul, chairman and chief executive, said that the company now expected, at best, a loss of £750,000, after exceptional costs, in the year to March 31. A factory is to be shut with the loss of 28 jobs.

Mr Saul, who owns 60 per cent of the

company, said: "It is bitterly disappointing to announce this news."

"With the actions already taken, we expect a significant turnaround in fortunes in the next financial year... and are budgeting to make a profit next year."

Exceptional costs of £200,000 would be incurred from the redundancies, which are to be mainly in production and administration.

In order to combat the impact of the strong pound, Mulberry has also decided to outsource its accessories production to

Italy and Spain and it will also close its Somerset handbag factory.

Before yesterday's warning, analysts had expected pre-tax earnings of around £750,000, but two months ago expectations were as high as £2.8 million.

Mr Saul and Geoffrey Davis, finance director, are to waive their interim dividends to save the company £71,000. The group said that it expects to be able to maintain its final dividend.

Mulberry shares joined the Alternative Investment Market in May 1996 at 153p.

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BUDGET COUNTDOWN: PART ONE

Expect Chancellor to opt for 'neutral'

Members of the Monetary Policy Committee can be forgiven for feeling a hint of Schadenfreude when Gordon Brown opens his Budget box in two weeks' time. For the past nine months the committee has wrestled with a policy dilemma, borne of a booming consumer sector and a manufacturing base faltering under the strain of the strong pound. For one day only the problem will be shared by Mr Brown as he reveals whether he intends to tweak fiscal policy to help to rebalance the economy.

In many ways, the Chancellor's dilemma is even more acute, as he will not only have to weigh up the needs of the economy but factor in the requirements of electoral politics. He will also have to try to double-guess the thinking of the MPC as there is little use in introducing macroeconomic reform only to see it undermined by the Bank moving interest rates two weeks later.

On paper, Mr Brown approaches this Budget from an unusual position of strength. The rapid improvement in

public finances has lifted any constraints that deficit financing can impose. Latest figures show a record monthly budget surplus of £10.4 billion, giving the Government an overall surplus for the first ten months of the year. End-of-year spending is likely to push government finances into the red, but even the most cautious City economists expect the Government to beat easily its own revised public sector borrowing requirement forecast of £9.4 billion, penicillating in a figure closer to £6.5 billion. Next year, the City expects the Government to achieve a year-end surplus — a year ahead of schedule.

The Chancellor has tried to dampen expectations that the Government is sitting on a huge windfall. He has revived memories of the last time the Government went into surplus. The Lawson tax cuts in the late 1980s forced the economy over the cliff, leading to a disastrous increase in the PSBR as recession took hold. It is not a mistake that Mr Brown wishes to repeat.

However, economists estimate that

the Chancellor could easily introduce tax cuts or spending increases to the value of £3 billion without threatening the Chancellor's own golden rule on borrowing. This sum would be more than enough to begin rolling out the promised 10p income tax starting rate or would go a long way towards appeasing the spending demands of the Government's own backbenchers.

There is little doubt, however, that Mr Brown will resist pressure to loosen fiscal policy, even by the amount dubbed prudent by City economists, for two other reasons. First, the Government is still committed to tough spending targets for this year and will not radically alter the spending pattern until its comprehensive spending review is completed in the summer.

Secondly, the Bank of England is likely to view tax cuts as adding fuel to the still robust consumer sector and

raise interest rates accordingly. It would appear completely out of character for Mr Brown to take this risk, especially given that the Treasury hinted in the pre-Budget report in November that it believed that interest rates still needed to rise to control inflation. It will be interesting to see, when the Treasury publishes its new inflation forecast with the Budget, whether it now believes that the Bank is on track to meet the target figure.

In this line of thinking, Mr Brown has the unanimous support of the City. Some economists are prepared to go further and argue that the Chancellor should even consider raising consumer taxes to help to take the pressure off interest rates and ease the strong pound.

However, a tax rise looks about as politically difficult as a tax cut is economically foolhardy. A Labour Chancellor clearly increasing taxes, even with the best of economic reasons, would play straight into opposition hands, casting his party not so much as "tax and spend" as "tax and not spend". It

would also compromise the new monetary policy framework, so carefully constructed by Mr Brown, by indicating that he does not regard the MPC as up to the job of controlling inflation.

The Chancellor appears to have little choice but to opt for a neutral Budget, concentrating on the microeconomic reforms, such as restructuring the tax system, that are his real political interest. His economic reform programme has already substantially changed the rules of the game. By handing control of interest rates to the Bank of England and making it clear that the Treasury does not really believe in using fiscal policy to control the economy, the Chancellor has severely limited his macroeconomic options. In the future, the macro debate at Budget time is likely to be limited to trying to judge the long-term impact of supply side reforms, such as tax redistribution, on the economy as a whole.

ALASDAIR MURRAY
Economics Correspondent

Green-fingered approach to cultivating jobs

Labour is committed to putting the environment at the heart of Government. Regulation is essential to environmental change. Economic intervention, particularly tax changes, are also required. However, welcome the work of John Prescott and Michael Meacher, there must also be action by the Treasury.

The Treasury's Statement of Intent says that green taxes can "encourage innovation in meeting higher environmental standards and deliver a more dynamic economy and a cleaner environment to the benefit of everyone". Yet the Budget last year failed to include serious green policies. The patience even of Labour-supporting environmentalists is almost exhausted.

The current tax system sends wrong signals to both producers and consumers. Taxes are high on things we approve of, such as jobs, and low on things we should discourage, including waste and pollution. Green taxes are demonstrably good both for the economy and the environment. Friends of the Earth ran a Budget package through the Cambridge Econometrics MDM-E3 economic model, used by the Treasury and uniquely based on the integration of economic, environmental and energy factors.

We suggested:

- an increase to 9 per cent in the road fuel duty escalator (the amount by which petrol tax rises every year), raising £14 billion by 2010.
- a carbon tax, raising £6 billion by the year 2010.
- a landfill tax — £3 billion.
- an aggregates tax — £2.4 billion.
- removal of tax perks and a tax on company car parking, raising £2.3 billion.

The total income of £28 billion from this very simple "polluter pays" package could be used to promote social justice and employment. For the purposes of testing against the economic model, we assumed that all the money was used to cut employers' national insurance by 3 per cent.

The results were startling. An extra 391,000 jobs were created by 2010, reducing unemployment by 166,000. All but eight sectors gained jobs and three 50th cent costs. GDP rose 0.2 per cent. By 2010, carbon dioxide emissions fell 7 per cent, a big step towards Labour's 20 per cent target. The environmental, economic and social impacts of our proposals were almost universally beneficial — a ground-breaking Budget.

Green tax revenues could

be targeted to produce even greater job and wealth creation effects. Money from fuel tax could be hypothecated for investment in public transport. We know from Germany that this will create twice as many jobs per pound as spending on new roads.

Yet there remains resistance, both from producers and from politicians, fearful of how voters will react. The road lobby case should be dismissed as special pleading. But the concerns of politicians and their constituents do need to be addressed.

Too many Labour backbenchers argue that green taxation is socially regressive, that higher domestic fuel prices would hit poor households hardest. But Labour could use part of its green tax income on improving social benefits or carrying out its promise for a national Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, creating 30,000 to 50,000 jobs and targeting households in fuel poverty. In Opposition, Michael Meacher wrote a paper designed to achieve this. He was blocked by Gordon Brown. Perhaps in Government, Mr Brown will show more imagination.

The rural poor need not be hit hardest if Labour delivers another election promise. Currently, a gas-guzzling

ENVIRONMENT

Ferrari is taxed at the same level as the Suzuki Swift, the most fuel efficient car on the road. If Vehicle Excise Duty is varied by size of engine and fuel efficiency, people who need cars because they live in the countryside need not be penalised. Labour must also target promised improvements in public transport, particularly regulation of the bus industry, at rural areas.

Sleekly suited corporate lobbyists, often former Shadow Cabinet advisers, are circling Treasury ministers. "Worthy, but unrealistic," they whisper. "Utopian," they mutter, and — supposedly a clincher with new Labour — "too brave by half".

They are sleazy, self-interested and wrong. Green taxes are economically and socially beneficial and could be major vote winners. The Chancellor's motto must be green and fair. Environmentalists will wait no longer. Warm words on global warming are no longer enough.

CHARLES SECRETT
Executive Director, Friends of the Earth

Janet Bush on the thinking behind Labour's drive to reform tax and benefits

New Labour, new Budget. In the action-packed months since the election, Gordon Brown has pioneered radical change, not just to the Budget process, but to virtually every aspect of the way the Chancellor goes about managing the economy. Mr Brown's speech on March 17 is going to be a very different animal from those unleashed on the Commons in the past.

Budgets have traditionally been the jealously guarded preserve of the Treasury, shrouded in obsessive secrecy so as to heighten the drama of Budget day. The Budget was always one of the most theatrical events of the parliamentary calendar, the Chancellor of the day's chance to show off his panache and political acumen.

The main voted Parliamentary day of the Year last autumn is not too serious-minded to pass up the opportunity to make a splash. Nor are he and his colleagues beyond some cynical news management, if this week's prescription charges news is anything to go by. There will be, as Andrew Dilnot, of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), put it after November's pre-Budget report, some brightly coloured lollipops to delight tabloid headline writers. There will be high-minded rhetoric about opportunity for all and an end to the hopelessness of long-term unemployment.

Nevertheless, Mr Brown has done much to junk the stilted aspects of the Budget-making process of the past. He has refreshingly shattered the illusion that the Budget is the result of a feverish few weeks of number-crunching by Treasury officials once a year. The contents of the first full Brown Budget will be the distillation of work done not just by civil servants, but



Gordon Brown highlighted training and work when last July he used a new Budget box made by apprentices

also by the numerous Government task forces that have been busy examining virtually every aspect of economic reform for months. It has become a much more public process.

Consultation and transparency, most obviously embodied in the innovation of the pre-Budget report, not to mention the Labour spin doctors' practice of market-testing ideas through leaks, winks and nudges, have made a nonsense of the ritual of pre-Budget purdah. The scope for producing the traditional rabbit out of the hat is limited.

That is not to say that this Budget is going to be dull — anything but. This is not going to be a Budget centred on a broad, macroeconomic judgment, the need to raise or lower taxes as a tool of economic management. Mr Brown has already set out his stall on the macroeconomy, leaving the setting of interest rates to the Bank of England and committing himself to Conservative plans

for public spending and the "golden rule" on public borrowing.

The greatest innovation of this Budget is that it will concentrate on the microeconomy that is Mr Brown's intellectual passion. Expected to be long and astonishingly detailed, this Budget will contain a plethora of interlinking changes to sav-

ing work. What moves this Chancellor is giving people the opportunity, the skills and the incentives to make a living, enjoy the confidence and satisfaction that comes from being financially self-reliant and, at the same time, enrich the economy.

Virtually every one of the key Budget changes that have been

ings and investment, the tax and benefit system and the labour market. Every layer of economic activity will be touched. If Mr Brown fulfils his promise for change.

After all the painstaking work by the Treasury and the Government's army of task forces, anything less than the most dramatically reforming Budget for decades will be a disappointment.

The zeitgeist of this Budget can be summed up in a single

word: work. What moves this Chancellor is giving people the opportunity, the skills and the incentives to make a living, enjoy the confidence and satisfaction that comes from being financially self-reliant and, at the same time, enrich the economy.

Plans for a 10p starting rate

of tax, the working families tax credit, subsidies for child care, reforming the national insurance system so that it no longer places such a burden on the low paid and, arguably, the minimum wage, are all pieces of the jigsaw.

The success of Mr Brown's Budget will be judged — and it may take days properly to analyse what is likely to be an unusually impenetrable list of reforms — on whether changes to individual taxes or benefits work as a coherent whole and whether the Chancellor has been bold enough to create genuine incentives to rejoin the labour market. On the question of scale, it will be fascinating to see to what extent Mr Brown is prepared to use redistribution from higher earners to help the unemployed and low paid.

There is a reason why successive Governments have baulked at reforming the current tax and benefit system, however long overdue. It is incredibly complicated to redesign the

system to ensure that there are more winners than losers. For example, the Government wants to reduce the rate at which benefits are taken away once people work in order to improve the arithmetic in favour of employment. But this invariably means higher marginal tax rates for many others.

In the case of the working families tax credit (WFTC), which the Chancellor has proposed to build on family credit, there are hugely difficult questions. Should the money be paid through the wage packet of the main earner — in the bulk of cases, the man — rather than, as in the case of family credit, to the woman? How can WFTC be integrated with other benefits, such as housing benefit, council tax benefit and disability working allowances? Or should it replace all these support mechanisms? Unless WFTC is integrated closely with income taxes, will it not simply add another layer of bureaucratic complexity to the system?

Even the most headline-grabbing proposals are minefields. The 10p starting rate, which the Chancellor is so wedded to, has long been criticised by the IFS, for example, which argues that barely 10 per cent of the gains go to the poorest 40 per cent of households. Reform of the national insurance system, which is disproportionately burdensome on the low paid, is possible, but it would involve redistribution.

Martin Taylor, chairman of the Government's tax and benefit task force, last month said a "big bang" integration of the tax and benefit systems was neither necessary nor desirable. Even if it were, it would be inconceivable that even a Chancellor as hard working as Mr Brown could contemplate such a thing so soon after coming to power. But grafting change on to an already complex system is fraught.

Mr Brown needs a big success on Budget day. Given the difficulties of what he has set out to do, it may be that only serious redistribution is going to bring the radicalism he desires. Perhaps the real surprise of this Budget will be that the Iron Chancellor finally reveals himself as a socialist.

Next week: What the Budget could mean to you

Docks away

WHEN the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) finally implodes this month, it leaves behind a little problem: £1.5 million a year's worth of profit, because the agency is frantically trying to find a new tenant for its Thames Quay headquarters on the Isle of Dogs. It seems when the LDDC was looking for property, in 1993, the market was on a bit of a high, and someone took it upon themselves to take a 25-year lease, with a break clause after 19



LDDC will vacate its London Docklands HQ this month

years — for £20 per sq ft, or rather more than the place is worth today, and despite the fact that the LDDC could expect to be wound up many years before 2014. By 1991, when the LDDC was ready to move in, the property market had moved south a long way, but a deal is a deal, and it's only public money anyway.

The LDDC disappears at the end of this month, although the odd accountant will be at Thames Quay until June ruling off the books. You and I might be worried, with that much unwanted office space sitting costing us rent. But the public sector does things differently. The block will go into the huge mass of publicly owned property, to be farmed out to some lucky government department, if needed. Oh, well. We all make mistakes in property. Such as building offices without putting in the necessary transport links first, so no one could get to them. Like they did in the London Docklands.

□ DAWSON International, the knitwear group publishing figures today, decided that, rather than use the usual grey men in suits in photographs, they would go for someone more fashionable, more high profile. So who was looking daft in New Bond Street yesterday in a chilly



cashier's number? That over-exposed nit-wit non-celebrity, the silly-billy Almost Person, the cerebrally-challenged, sub-literate 31 Girl herself. Tara Palmer-Tomkinson.

Bear squeeze

JUST what is going on at PDM, or UBS Asset Management, both of which names are in alternate use by the switchboard, 1 notice? The City is rife with rumours of trouble for Tony Dye and Paul Meredith, leading lights of a fund manager that has achieved unwanted notoriety for its bearish views on the stock market. One says they are about to depart, after a clash with SBC, their new

owners after the "merger" with UBS. Except they are still there.

The latest rumour concerns a flight Dye and Meredith are supposed to have made to New York three weeks ago to discuss with Gary Brinson, who runs the merged asset management business, a management buyout of PDM. Or bits of it, depending on who you listen to on the cocktail party circuit. Management buyouts of investment management firms are horribly expensive. Except that the venture capital world is awash with cash. The smoke signals from PDM suggest the MBO rumour is a long way from the truth. But the rumours suggest something must happen there before long.

□ A GROUP of steam enthusiasts is rebuilding a railway on a Staffordshire moorland. The fund-raising is offered as an investment opportunity, with a prospectus, share issue and travel concessions. They have, perhaps, still a bit to learn about the language of finance because the scheme is named after the picturesque valley the railway runs along — the Churnet.

Screen save

A LIGHTHEARTED computer game based on the Budget sounds like a contradiction in terms, especially when you can waste time and electricity cutting people's heads off

or frying aliens instead. But those merry jesters Ernst & Young have come up with a game of snakes and ladders on the firm's web-site based on pundits' predictions. Commuter unrest forces you to buy back Railtrack — back three spaces. PM calls a snap election — back to start. Let councils raise taxes, then slice government funds to them — a nice cynical ring, so forward ten. The accountants expect most players to be job-seeking students, which figures. Except they will all be too young to remember the last time a Chancellor got into trouble over a snake.

MARTIN WALLER



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Why not change the way we work?

Stronger sterling fails to hinder Inspec

By MARTIN BARROW

INSPEC GROUP, the specialty and fine chemicals company, lifted pre-tax profits 47 per cent to £47.1 million in 1997, despite taking a £10 million hit from the strength of sterling.

Inspec shares, which peaked at 366½p in 1996, recovered 22½p to 230p yesterday in response to the results, which were at the top end of expectations, and to a confident trading statement.

Dr John Hollowood, chairman, said demand for most of the company's chemicals products is firm and growth is anticipated from the capital investments made last year.

The continued strength of sterling remains the largest threat to the company's UK businesses, but this would be offset by opportunities for activities based in continental Europe because of their more competitive currencies.

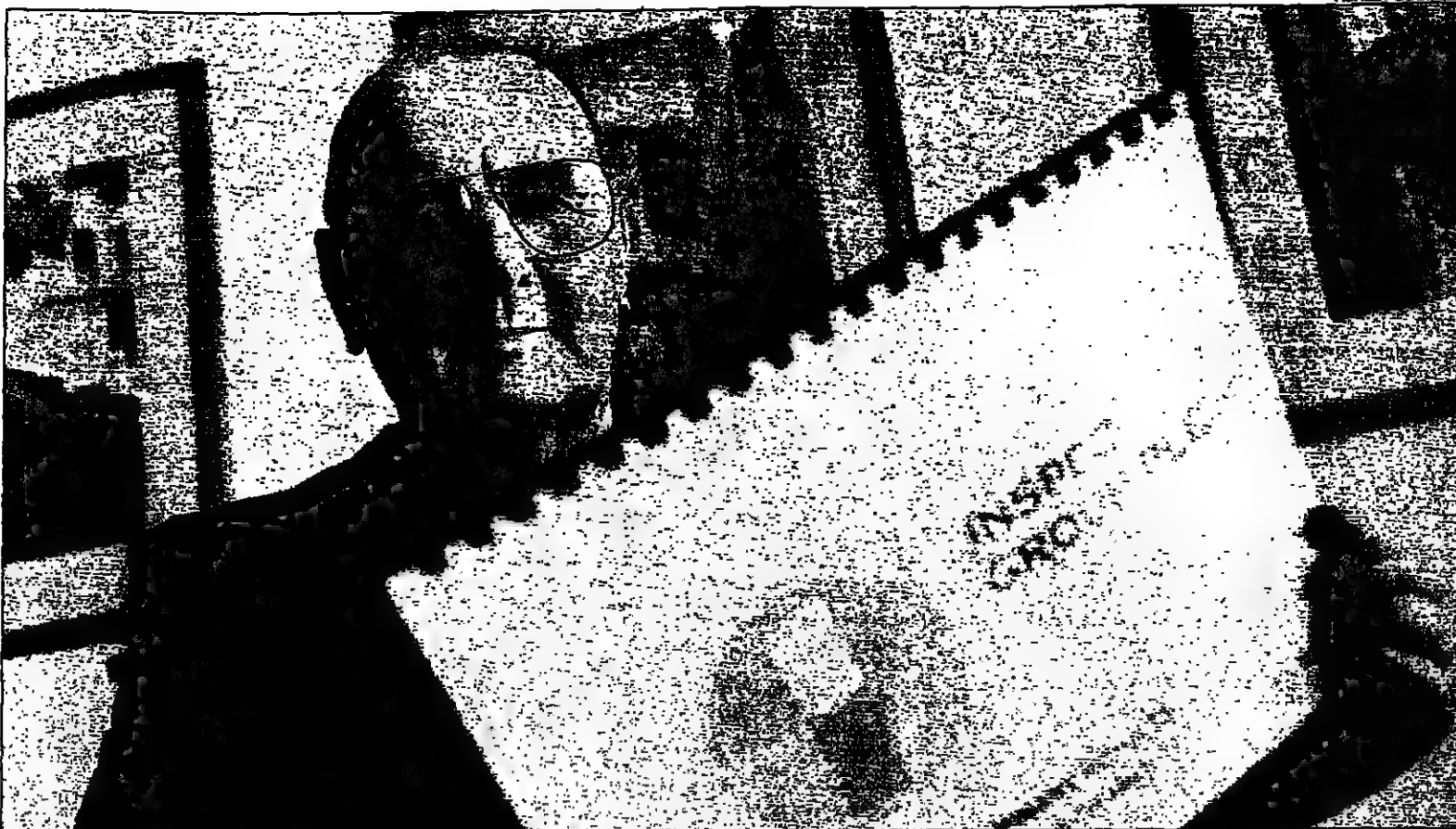
Dr Hollowood also said the impact of the Far East crisis is expected to be limited, except for glycol, where prices have suffered due to lower demand and the anticipated effect of additional new capacity due on stream this year.

In 1997, the company's main focus was the integration of Shell Fine Chemicals, which was acquired for £200 million in 1996. The company has also made inroads into reducing the debt associated with the acquisition, with gearing falling to 138 per cent of net assets from 228 per cent.

Fine chemicals contributed £24.3 million to operating profits in its first full year, up from £11.5 million for just six months in 1996. Profits in specialties slipped to £21 million from £22.09 million, with volume increases helping to offset the impact of the strong pound in the UK.

Losses in performance products, comprising fibres, mining and foams, increased to £2.9 million from £1.2 million, reflecting product development costs and entry into new markets.

Earnings rose to 22.2p a share from 18.24p. There is a final dividend of 4.5p a share, lifting the total to 6.75p from 6.3p in the previous year.



Chemical solution: John Hollowood, chairman of Inspec, with a copy of its preliminary results that showed pre-tax profits increased by 47 per cent

Review prompts Thistle to put 30 hotels up for sale

By KATHY LIPARI

THISTLE HOTELS, one of Britain's largest hotel groups, is to sell 30 of its properties worth about £100 million, the company announced yesterday as it unveiled a 34 per cent rise in pre-tax profits for 1997.

However, Thistle which is 46 per cent owned by New Zealand's Brierley Investments, failed to deliver long-awaited news regarding the

appointment of a new chief executive. Robert Peel, the former chief executive, resigned in November, receiving a £700,000 termination payment, and analysts had hoped that the group would use the release of its annual results as an opportunity to make an announcement.

Rodney Price, the chairman, could only tell investors a shortlist of candidates for the role had been compiled and an

appointment of an outside UK executive would be made within weeks.

The City appeared to be frustrated with the continuing wait and marked the shares down 9p to 181½p.

Thistle recorded a pre-tax profit of £80.6 million in the year to December 28, which was in line with expectations after the trading statement in January and a sharp rebound from the £60.1 million

achieved in 1996, when the group wrote off £38 million.

Mr Price said Thistle had benefited from "buoyant market conditions" in 1997 that were likely to continue this year. "There are no signs at the moment that this is likely to deteriorate at all, so it's so far so good."

The chairman said that he expected further profit growth in the current year. However, after a review of the hotels, a

decision had been made to sell 30 of its non-core provincial properties during the next year, which would leave Thistle with a portfolio of about 60 predominantly 4-star hotels.

The properties for sale had been making profits, but were contributing less than 10 per cent of hotel gross profits in 1997, Mr Price said.

Thistle intended to outlay a further £50 million redeveloping and upgrading its existing hotels in 1998, after spending £49.6 million last year.

During 1997, Thistle's turnover increased 10 per cent to £319.7 million. Earnings rose 20.8 per cent to 12.36p a share and operating profits, taking into account 1996's large writedowns, were 8.8 per cent stronger at £112.5 million.

Investors are to receive a final dividend of 2.8p up from 2p, making a total of 4.2p.

Average room rates rose 10.5 per cent to £60.82, while occupancy levels increased from 66.7 to 68.6 per cent and room yields were 13.7 per cent higher at £41.72 per room.

Partco seeks further growth

By OUR CITY STAFF

PARTCO, the vehicle component specialist, is on the lookout for more deals in the rapidly consolidating market after boosting profits by acquisition last year.

The company doubled pre-tax profits, from £10.5 million to £21.3 million, in the year to December 31 on sales up 89 per cent to £386 million. The

group spent £2.35 million on reorganising Dana Distribution Europe, which owns Brown Brothers, during the year. The business contributed £9.2 million of operating profit.

Earnings per share rose from 19.3p to 21.1p out of which the full-year dividend rises 8.8 per cent to 8.7p after

payment of a 6.1p final. The shares rose 4p to 329½p.

Gordon Yardley, chairman, said: "The acquisitions made during 1997 have yet to realise their full potential within the group and, as the market continues to consolidate rapidly, we see further scope for the acquisition of businesses which fit well with our existing operations."

Philip Wragg, the chief executive said the group hoped to reduce gearing from the 94 per cent level at the end of 1997 to 50 per cent by the end of 1998. A year ago gearing stood at a pro forma 170 per cent. Mr Wragg added that Dana's small Portuguese operation, Europacas, is in line for divestment.

Confident Porsche drives shares to high

SHARES in Porsche rose more than 3 per cent after the German luxury carmaker predicted higher sales and profits. Porsche also said that it would decide soon whether to build a sport utility vehicle. Porsche said results for the first half were better than reported at the annual meeting on January 23 and predicted a rise in sales and earnings in the financial year to July 31. The news lifted Porsche preference shares to a high of DM3,450 (£1,155) up DM110 or 3.3 per cent.

Porsche said sales were up 10.2 per cent at DM196 billion (£66.5 million) for the first half of its financial year and predicted that group sales in its 1997-98 financial year would total more than DM4.5 billion. Net profit for the first half was DM69.7 million, compared with DM38.4 million.

Tarmac in £90m rail deal

TARMAC, the construction and quarries group, has won a Railtrack contract worth up to £90 million. The contract, for work in East Anglia, was won by Centrac, part of Tarmac Construction Services, and is worth £18 million a year for the next three years. An option to extend for two more years would raise the total to £90 million. From May Centrac will renew more than 50 miles of railway track per year in areas covering Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and parts of North London.

Epwin advances

EPWIN GROUP, the specialist building products company, lifted pre-tax profits to £5.06 million from £3.22 million in 1997. Earnings rose to 18.2p a share from 15.5p. The total dividend is lifted to 9.85p a share from 9p, with a final 6.7p. The shares rose 16p to 163p yesterday. Jim Rawson, the chairman, said the strong performance was achieved against a backdrop of overcapacity in the extrusion market, highly competitive pricing and continued pressure on margins.

HK contract for Atkins

WS ATKINS, the engineering consultancy and support services group, has won a £17.6 million contract to build part of Kowloon-Canton Railway Corp's new West Rail development. Atkins has secured the part of the package containing Tsuen Wan West underground station in Hong Kong's New Territories. The station is the largest on the project and requires land to be reclaimed from the sea. It will also have to relocate infrastructural facilities, including a ferry pier.

Quinn creates 330 jobs

ALMOST 330 jobs are to be created at a new glass factory in Northern Ireland. The £60 million plant at Derrylin in Co Fermanagh is being set up by the Sean Quinn Group. It is scheduled to begin production next June with the jobs being created over the next five years. Gerry Loughran, of Northern Ireland's Department of Economic Development, said: "This introduces an important new industry and the latest technology to a rural area far from the traditional manufacturing centres."

Compass stops at Philips

COMPASS GROUP has won a contract to provide catering services for Philips, the electronics group, worldwide. The agreement, to be implemented throughout this year, will at first cover 110,000 Philips staff in The Netherlands, France, Germany, Britain, Spain, Belgium and the US. It will initially include 118 self-service restaurants as well as Compass brands such as Upper Crust and Caffè Ritazza. The Philips deal will become the biggest food-service deal for Compass.

Trafficmaster moves into the black

By OUR CITY STAFF

TRAFFICMASTER, the traffic information network, made its first profit to date during 1997 and yesterday revealed plans to launch a new navigation service during June. Shares in the company, which was floated on the stock

market four years ago, rose 18½p to 387p after it revealed a pre-tax profit of £241,000 in the year to December 31 against a loss of £3.4 million for 1996. Earnings reversed from losses of 14.02p a share to 0.84p a share. There is no dividend. Trafficmaster sold 250,000

of its information units in 1997, up from 56,000 in 1996. Sales rose 151 per cent to £8.64 million.

On prospects Sir James McKinnon, chairman, and the board say that profits will benefit from the full-year effect of Vauxhall and Cellner contracts signed during 1997 and

will be further boosted by new services and contracts during 1998.

The Trafficmaster Oracle service is now fitted as standard on Vauxhall Vectra and Omega models.

The company was able to end the year with cash of £13 million.

Computer Sciences looks for white knight

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

COMPUTER SCIENCES Corporation is seeking a white knight to fend off a \$9 billion (£5 billion) hostile takeover bid from Computer Associates. CSC has so far insisted that losing its independence could mean losing up to 25 per cent of its customers.

Potential white knights include Andersen Consulting, AT&T, IBM and Hewlett Packard. The key issue will be whether the agreed bidder sells software or hardware products. CSC's main business is IT consultancy and being owned by a product maker would undermine the independence of CSC consultants who routinely advise clients on choosing software and hardware.

CSC has 5,000 British employees who will be strongly affected by the outcome of the takeover battle. Managers fear that many highly skilled engineers and programmers could leave CSC if Computer Associates, a leading software company, gained control of the business.

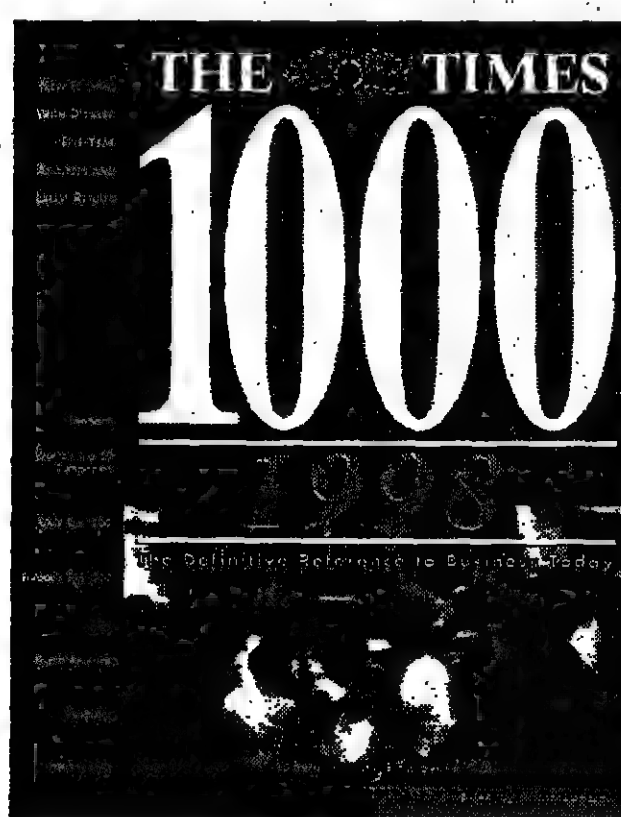
A British spokesman said: "It all depends on the white knight. I am not aware of any particular white knight scenario because I'm not in the inner loop. But the white knight's independence is one factor along with cultural fit and shareholder value."

He said UK staff had been concerned about the Computer Associates bid but managers had not yet received any feedback from them regarding white knights.

CSC's biggest contract is with British Aerospace.

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Play host to a shooting party

Film-makers and advertisers are always searching for homes with star quality, says **Aranda Loose**

Star-struck homeowners will be pleased that the British film industry is on the up, thanks in part to huge injections of government and lottery cash and tax breaks outlined in the last Budget. As a result, the demand for properties to play starring roles is booming. So much so that several upmarket estate agents are acting as talent scouts.

Filmed entertainment has become one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, says Katrina Fletcher at Strutt & Parker's Film Location Agency in Newbury, Berkshire, and Britain is now getting a piece of the action. "The Government's decision in the 1997 Budget to give the film industry a financial boost, together with a massive injection of lottery funding, has breathed new life into the industry. People who would previously have gone to Ireland to take advantage of tax breaks are coming back to Britain."

Strutt & Parker has recently provided locations for *The Woman in White* and *Tom Jones* from its database of properties. Ms Fletcher says: "We deal with all the paperwork for property owners, negotiating fees with the production company, anything from £800 to more than £3,000 per day, producing a contract and making sure all insurance is in place."

Location Seekers, in association with Hamptons International, offers a similar service and is looking for locations for a Carlton Television production of *Cider with Rosie* and the BBC's *Vanity Fair*, as well as for advertisement and magazine shoots, which also can be lucrative, says the company's Penny Salter. "Our clients tend to think of BBC costume dramas when we talk about locations, but the advertising clients, fashion shoots and television programmes tend to be the bread and butter of the industry. Indeed, advertising clients often have more substantial budgets to ensure that they get exactly what they are looking for in that short space of time."



Philippa Spencer-Smith acted as an extra when scenes for *The Woman in White* were filmed at her Jacobean manor house

STARRING ROLE FOR AN OLD COUNTRY MANOR HOUSE

Philippa Spencer-Smith landed a role as an extra when the BBC last year filmed scenes for *The Woman in White* at her home, a Jacobean manor house near Hitchin in Hertfordshire. An old kitchen was turned into

Mrs Catherick's parlour, and the courtyard was used to film a scene where the three main characters supposedly arrive at a lodge. Mrs Spencer-Smith says: "I registered with Strutt & Parker a year ago

and I was quite keen on the idea; I would like to do it again. There was not much disruption over the three days. They wanted an extra to walk about a bit, so I did it."

"Our criteria are that properties should be a good example of their type, or have character and individuality, or display such features as follies or spiral staircases for photographic shoots."

Ms Fletcher says would-be locations must have large rooms and space outside for parking. And she says: "No one is ever prepared for the shock of seeing 30 people turn up. It can be tremendous fun, rubbing shoulders with the stars, but it can sometimes be frightening

for novices. They have rented out their home and it is no longer theirs to command."

Christy Kilgour at Knight Frank, which is selling Cricket St Thomas, the setting for *To the Manor Born*, is often approached by location managers keen to use stately homes and estates that the firm has sold or managed, and helps property owners to negotiate suitable fees and contracts.

"We explain to our clients that there can be downsides and disrup-

tions. Using a property for a photo shoot is easy, maybe taking only a couple of hours, but if your house is going to be the main set for a costume drama, filming could go on for months. Owners should check that the necessary insurance is in place, and access and entry provisions, particularly in larger houses. Film-makers may also want to use items such as paintings already in the house, or animals in the parkland, so additional fees need to be in place."

Ms Salter advises homeowners to take professional advice and arm themselves with a watertight contract and a relaxed attitude. "Common sense is the best approach. As a rule of thumb, if you would remove something from a room for a teenager's party, remove it for filming."

Film-makers will also pay for redecoration if rooms have been altered during filming, something one wouldn't expect from teenage partygoers.

Chickens come home to ruse

Adam Barnard reveals the tricks some landowners use to bypass green belt laws

A NEW threat to the green belt is emerging in the unlikely form of pigs and poultry. Landowners are taking advantage of a weakness in planning policy.

The owner of an eight-acre property in the Home Counties submitted an application for the use of her land. She wanted to farm free-range chickens, she said, and would be all right if her temporary agricultural dwelling was made permanent.

The application seemed innocent enough, and was granted. Second-hand chicken sheds having been installed, a house was built. The property was sold. And the chickens? They never appeared.

The story is one of many and Michael Fletcher, a land agent with Lane Fox and an agricultural consultant for local authorities in South Wales and the Thames Valley, has seen it all before. "I have been analysing applications for the past six years," he says. "Some have been extraordinary. Only about 40 per cent are genuine."

Mr Fletcher is responsible for assessing planning applications and deciding whether a case for a dwelling is reasonable. Under agricultural occupancy restriction laws, any proposed house on greenfield land must be directly related to the needs of the owner.

John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, announced last week that 60 per cent of new homes must be built on brownfield land — a site that has been used before — in the next ten years, and that builders must prove there is not a suitable brownfield site before building on greenfield land.

Mr Fletcher cites a flaw in the Department of the Environment's planning policy guidance document that provides the framework for building in the countryside: it allows people to claim "agricultural need" when applying for planning permission. You can't blame people for trying. The loophole exists. Keeping free-range chickens doesn't take much time. It is the easiest way to a country home."

Mr Fletcher says some people

will try anything to put a house on protected land. He adds: "Local authorities need to be vigilant. I've seen proposals for mushroom farms and carp farms in some pretty unlikely locations."

As for the supposed free-range farmer, once she had quit the scene, the next owner applied for a large agricultural building, which he claimed was for intensive pig farming. Mr Fletcher discovered plans for a storage business.

Most manipulators are caught, but sometimes it is impossible to see a bogus application before it is too late. A four-bedroom house in the grounds of a farm in the Vale of Glamorgan was built after the owner persuaded the local council that he wanted to set up a goat dairy. The house is on the market for £255,000, the owner believes in America, and there is not a goat to be found roaming the property's 44 acres.

Some applications are not so much insincere as unfeasible. One landowner in Barry, South Wales, wanted to set up an ostrich-rearing unit. Permission was denied.

An application for a house in South Glamorgan was made on the ground that the owner wanted to grow bonsai trees. It, too, was rejected.

Another landowner not far from London had a good interest in farming but, as Mr Fletcher puts it, "Had he kept that many pigs, the whole land would have been a sty. People should not go into farming on the chance they might be able to build a house in the green belt."

Mr Fletcher believes that the "loophole" in department policy needs to be redirected towards existing farms, or else be excluded from green belt areas. He says: "As it is, it promotes a smallholdings culture on the green belt. It needs to be very seriously rethought."

A spokesman for the Environment Department says: "It is a matter for the local planning authorities to take enforcement action if planning permission has been breached. This could result in the demolition of the building."

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TIMES CLASSIFIED MEANS SATISFIED

Right Hon for the right-on

Culture Secretary Chris Smith tells Nigel Williamson of his plans to give special-interest music a government leg-up

Chris Smith is far too clever to fall for what in Whitehall circles they still call the "Stephen Dorrell question". The hapless former Tory Heritage Secretary was once asked to name the last movie he had seen and the man in charge of government policy towards the film industry was forced to admit that he could not remember.

A change of administration later, sitting in the same office to discuss the Government's attitude to the music industry, it seemed only fair to ask Labour's culture supremo to name the most recent concert at which he was to be found strutting his funky stuff. "Bob Dylan," came the answer immediately, and added for good measure that the last time he ventured into a record store he came out with a Schubert song cycle.

It is not only musical tastes which have changed at what used to be known as "the ministry of fun". One of Smith's first acts on taking the job was to drop the official title of the Department of National Heritage. In its place emerged the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in which the old watchwords of excellence and quality were supplemented by new Labourmantras such as access and inclusion.

On Saturday Smith will reinforce his commitment to musical diversity when he makes the keynote address at Musically '98, a conference which will bring together representatives from across the non-mainstream music industry. The event will embrace the worlds of folk, jazz, electronic and ethnic music — in fact, anybody whose creativity lies outside the categories of commercial pop and subsidised classical elitism.

Smith will use the occasion to signal a subtle but significant shift in priorities designed to encourage the Arts Council to spread its funding across a wider musical spectrum. This may further alarm those already dismayed by his proposal that the Royal Opera and English National Opera — two of the most heavily subsidised arts institutions in the land — should share a home. But while the Culture Secretary has a passion for Schubert, he is equally passionate in his hatred for what he calls the

"false distinction" between high and low culture.

Ask him how he justifies the fact that more than 90 per cent of funding currently goes to the European operatic and classical tradition and he admits that he cannot. But "the Arts Council has been moving a bit on this in recent times. Over the past year or two £18 million has gone to jazz and there has been a bit of support for Asian music. So I think we are beginning to see a move out of the pure classical tradition. It is a good start but it is only a start."

He cites four key tests which should determine whether Arts Council funding is justified — access, innovation, excellence and

photo opportunities designed to attract young voters. "Music is becoming an increasingly important economic fact of life in Britain and up until now governments haven't recognised that. We now earn more in exports from music than from steel."

But many in the industry remain deeply suspicious of Labour's interest. Steve Sutherland, the editor of *New Musical Express*, voices a widely held view when he argues that the best policy Government can adopt towards pop music is to stay away.

"He's right, up to a point," Smith says. "The Government isn't offering handouts to popular music which can survive perfectly happily on its own. But we can take steps to help to establish the right framework in which it can flourish."

6 The 1960s sense that we can make real changes is coming back

education. "It seems to me that there are many art forms in jazz, folk and ethnic music which meet those criteria as much as most classical music does," he says. "There are difficulties in dividing up the money that is available, but within those constraints an expansion of activity in those areas would be welcome. I think that classical music is important, but we should not allow that to shut us off from other genres."

In recent months Smith has made himself highly visible in popular music circles, just as likely to be seen at Midem, the pop industry's annual trade fair in Cannes, as sitting in a box at the Royal Ballet. Last week he presided over the first meeting of the Music Industry Forum, a pop task force whose members include Mick Hucknall of Simply Red, Sir George Martin and Alan McGee, the head of Oasis's record label, Creation.

Smith insists that there is much more to his role than a series of

Such as? Smith cites several areas identified at the first gathering of the Music Industry Forum. "It was an introductory meeting and we went around the table asking everyone what was on their minds. They were very concerned about piracy and about intellectual property protection in a digital age, when CD-quality sound can be transmitted across the Internet. I have no intention of meddling in the music industry, but these are issues where the Government has a legitimate role."

One area where Smith is proud to "meddle" is to use his office to try to halt the decline of instrument tuition in schools. He plans to announce "in the next few weeks" a major new initiative designed to guarantee every school child the right to learn a musical instrument, funded partly from lottery money. "I am greatly troubled about kids not having a chance to learn an instrument," he says. "Tuition is in sharp decline and is now divided along class and income lines. If you can afford to pay to play you probably still have the chance, but if you live in a poorer area you do not. I've been looking at how we put together a patchwork of funding in order to build that up again."

He is equally excited by another lottery-funded venture, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. "It is basically a talent bank of £200



A bust of Otto Klemperer on the one hand, perhaps a tape of Bob Dylan in the other: Chris Smith's musical tastes are nothing if not catholic

million and it is one of the most exciting things we are putting in place," he says. "It will support artists and musicians who need help to turn their skill into a product or a career. That might include assisting individuals to make their first recordings or to obtain final training at a top-notch institute abroad." The fund will be

ready to make its first grants by the autumn.

Smith's own personal musical Top Ten ranges not only from Dylan to Schubert but from Robbie Williams to Mahler via Queen, Scott McKenzie's flower power anthem *San Francisco* also figures in his "desert island discs" and Smith confesses that being a child

of the 1960s has shaped the attitude he brings to the job. "I was once asked what had most influenced me politically and I answered growing up in the 1960s," he says.

"At that time there was an enormous sense of hope that it was possible to change the world by democratic decision-making — and music and the arts were very much

part of that sense of excitement. That got knocked out of us in the cynical 1970s and 1980s. I think we are now beginning to rediscover a little bit of that. Perhaps it is in a more mature and sober way, but the sense that we can make real changes is coming back."

• Musically '98 takes place at the Barbican on Saturday and Sunday

Unlucky seven

AS THE Britpop fallout runs on apace, the wave of bands trying to exorcise themselves from its lachrymose grip is a sorry sight. For Shed Seven (at the Assembly Rooms, Edinburgh) it should be easier than most to leave the gang, since they were never really part of it in the first place.

Frontman Nick Winter was too pretty, too wide-eyed and sensitive in his optimism, and their records not nearly macho or spacey enough to join the fold. They were the pop group who discovered their feminine side, on whom you could wear your kid brother.

Respectable enough, but mere lightweight compared to the so-called real thing. Yet, perversely, Shed Seven have had more Top Ten hits than most, and are blessed with a

TOP

solid sixth-form fan base who understand what it means to be deep as well as macho. On the day their new single is released, Shed Seven begin this short war with *It's Getting Better* and finish with *Going for Gold*, which is a statement of intent isn't half bad. Both songs are awash with enough classic pop hooks to get a crowd too young to be cynical waving their arms as if the world's at their feet. Yet in between comes a set that, while peppered with finely crafted anthems, is as dull as dishwater.

Despite all the claims of the band rocking out on their forthcoming album, the new single *She Left Me on Friday* sounds like a blur covering a Black Grape B-side. To be fair, live at least it makes sense, sounding looser and more comfortable in its groove. As the gorgeously yearning *Chasing Rainbows* shows, though, Shed Seven come from a lineage that dates back to the Smiths. Yet here this should make them inspirational and special, tonight they merely sounded pedestrian.

It is hardly tell where the fault lies, though the booming acoustics of the venue don't help matters much. Shed Seven are a band lacking that killer punch to go the distance.

NEIL COOPER

CONCERTS: Stunning Shostakovich, neglected Parry

Season to taste

As March unfurled, so the London Symphony Orchestra and Mstislav Rostropovich continued their Shostakovich series with a performance of the composer's own "spring" symphony, the Sixth. It was a slow thaw, with the watery light of the divided violins barely warming the dark intensity of the cellos' meditation. But by the time yet another of those rumbustious street bands had passed by, the "joy and youthfulness" of spring which Shostakovich wanted to communicate was in full bloom.

The appearance of this brass band at the end of a blazing Rossini finale — as well as the little Jazz Suite which opened the concert — came as further confirmation, in this revelatory series, of the true stature of Shostakovich. Only the greatest artists, after all, are humble and deeply human enough to exclude nothing from their recreative attention. And only great performances illustrate the point so graphically.

Rostropovich had sustained the meditative concentration of the first movement with remarkable skill, shaping, moulding and pointing each phrase so as to create ever-changing contours within an illusion of almost total stillness. And then, at the heart of this tripartite rite of spring, what a frolicking and a gambolling, as sap rose in the woodwind and the brass leapt as high and mad as March hares.

One of the real joys of this Shostakovich series is the programme book: no mere assemblage of commentaries and advertisements, but a remarkable collation of penetrating essays by the musicologist Manahil Jakubov, who has also provided pages of unpublished archive material and photos. He, like everyone, has a view on the much-debated ending of the Fifth Symphony, and it is cogently argued. But whether those searing brass chords and hammering rhythms ring out as a dictator's command to rejoice, whether they are screaming to the persecutors "beat me harder!", or whether, as Jakubov feels, they are a true celebra-

ISO/
Rostropovich
Barbican

tion of rebirth and the triumph of culture over barbarism, seemed to matter little on Sunday night.

The "answers" to the "secret" are not, in any case, mutually exclusive. And the best performances of this symphony show that even the search for an answer is beside

the point. This performance was one of the best. The clashes of internal contradiction were unsparingly violent; the vibrancy of the strings grew in brilliance and strength even when it seemed as if they had given their all. And moments like the split second of restraint before the raised foot of a march and the fragile transparency of the final chords were typical of playing in which the soul of Shostakovich is being bared.

HILARY FINCH

Chaste passion of the drawing-room

KNOWN by millions only for his tune to *Jerusalem*, Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry wrote prolifically in genres both sacred and secular.

In recent years his symphonies and piano concertos have been given more exposure, and there have always been advocates of the many songs he wrote throughout his career. Last Friday was the 150th anniversary of his birth, and it was good to have a celebratory recital that brought together a selection of those songs, together with a performance of a neglected string quartet: Parry's Third in G.

There was a good reason for the quartet's neglect. After its sole performance, at a private house in Bayswater in the year of its completion, 1890, the music of the quartet, preserved in a score in another hand, was not recognised as being Parry's until 1992.

In all honesty, however, the work did not, in this performance by the Emperor Quartet, reveal itself to be a lost masterpiece. The andante possessed a certain lyrical charm and the scherzo and finale managed to generate some sense of urgency, but too much of the rest lacked real character.

The Emperor Quartet was better employed in George Butterworth's song cycle *Love Blows as the Wind Blows*.

Parry
Anniversary
Wigmore Hall

heard here in an unfamiliar version for voice and string quartet. These Edwardian songs about love and regret have a resonance, a buttoned-up quality typical of the era, yet also a capacity to release emotion with little notice. The final line of one of them, "Love blows into the heart", was delivered like a hurricane by the baritone Stephen Roberts.

To a selection of some of Parry's finest songs — from various sets of the *English Lyrics* — Roberts, accompanied by Terence Allbright, brought a similar eruptive passion to bear, frequently breaking through the surface of placid, sensitive word-setting to clinch the emotional argument.

Especially memorable were the simple strophic *And Yet I Love her till I Die* — a touching avowal of eternal love at first sight — the more mysteriously evocative *Sleep* and the poignant *Looking Backward*, yearning for the intense spontaneity of conjugal love in the springtime of life.

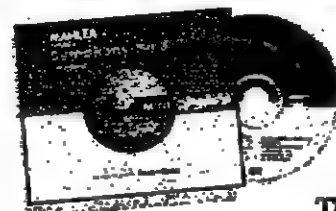
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High Grant and Andie MacDowell in *Four Weddings and a Funeral*

CHANGING TIMES

Who knows what Katy did?

Children's classics
are high on
publishers' agendas
these days.

Nicolette Jones
finds out why
words still matter

When grandparents buy books for their grandchildren, they usually want the stories that gripped them in their own childhoods. Publishers have taken this fact to heart, producing children's classics in gift editions specially designed to appeal to grown-ups.

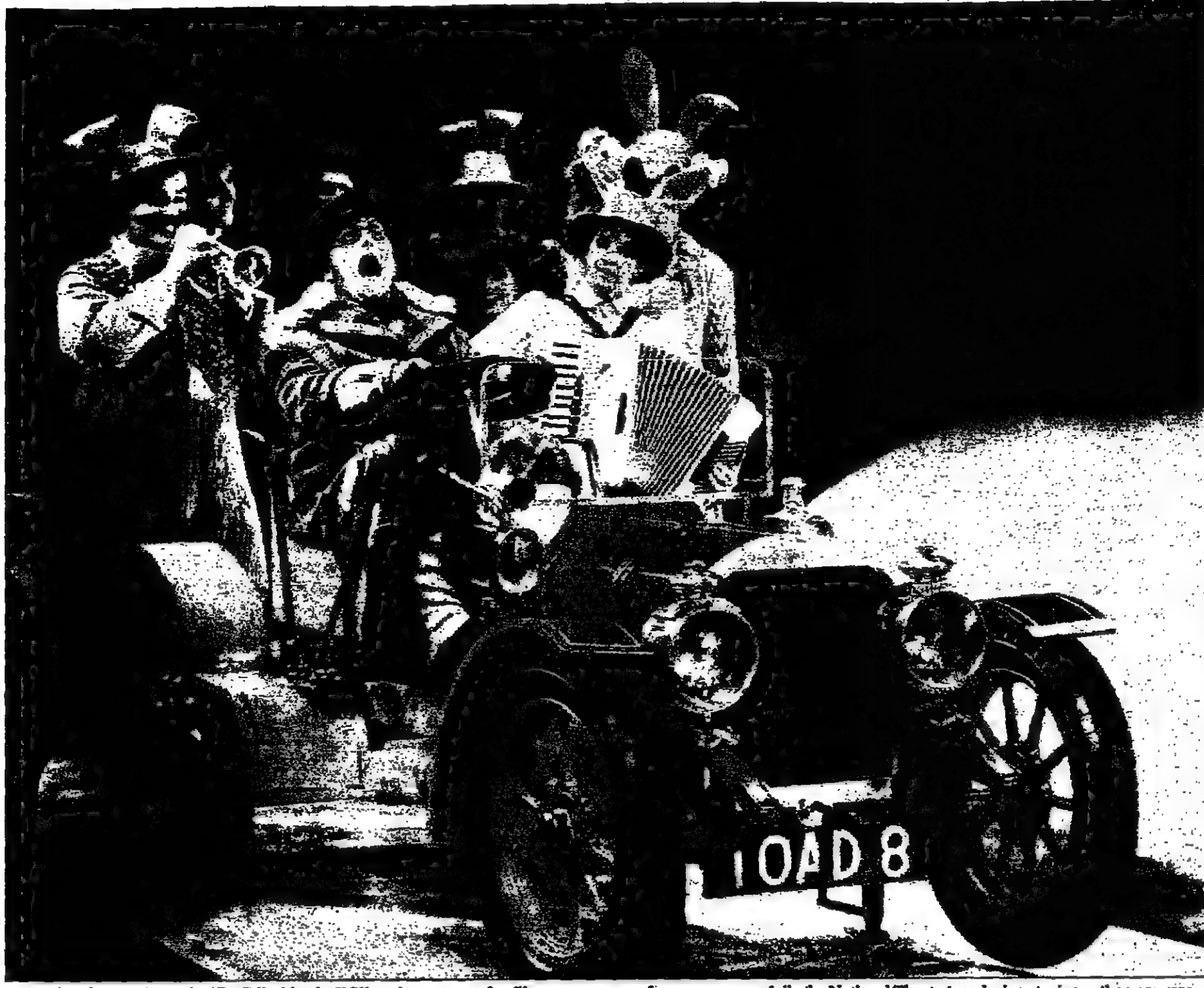
The latest such venture is launched tomorrow, with a dozen hardbacks of acknowledged greats including *Little Women*, *The Railway Children* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. These are Andre Deutsch Classics, priced at £4.99 and backed, or more precisely fronted, by the newscaster Trevor McDonald, whose face and supportive quotes grace the jackets.

This new list has been designed in "sweet-drip" colours so as not to look too stuffy, to guard against the danger that the books will emerge from the gift-wrapping paper to spend a lifetime on the shelf. Doting relatives take it for granted that classics are a good present, even if they might not always be the recipient's first choice (one publisher's publicist remarked carelessly of her own classics list: "I can't imagine children buying them"). But does it really matter that a new generation reads these books?

McDonald thinks it does. Classics, by his definition, are books that have "entered the vocabulary of life". He believes that to have no knowledge of them is to be "impoverished", to lack the proper frame of reference: they are "part of the heritage of the English language". They are also, he thinks, strong on story and character and rich in types that last: he cites Pippi in *Great Expectations* (an influential work in his own youth, though not on the Deutsch list, who cleans with a fervour that makes everyone uncomfortable. "I know people like that now," says McDonald).

David Campbell, who re-launched Everyman's Library and has published, since 1992, some 40 children's classics in handsome gold-tooled hardbacks with silk ribbons at £9.99 each, agrees. His first motive for the project was that he felt many modern children's books were too televisual: they had lots of pictures, few pages and few words.

Campbell wanted, admirably, to publish books for reading, some as long as 450 pages. He also wanted to reinstate such illustrators as Kate Greenaway, Arthur Rackham and Aubrey Beardsley and Walter Crane, and found illustrations by Heath Robinson and Mervyn Peake, among others, that were neglected out of print. Three-quarters of a million copies of the Everyman Children's Classics have now been sold, half a million in America. They include everything



Worth a thousand words? *The Wind in the Willows* is now more familiar to many as performance — especially the National Theatre's enduring staging — than as prose.

from *Aesop's Fables* to Roald Dahl's *BFG*.

Equally comprehensive are Puffin Classics, elegant paperbacks at around £2.99. And Pavilion publishes a good-looking paperback series with colour illustrations by modern hands, including Quentin Blake and Michael Foreman. Ten are in print at £4.99, six more are coming in the autumn.

All these classics lists inevitably overlap. *Treasure Island* and *Black Beauty* are ubiquitous. But each list also has its exclusives: only Deutsch offers Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, only Everyman Jean Webster's *Daddy-Long-Legs*, only Pavilion (in the pipeline) *Three Men in a Boat*, and only Puffin *The Phantom of the Opera*.

So what does "classic" mean, and what do buyers expect? The word is perceived as a stamp of quality, a guarantee that children will get the best. But who decides? Inevitably in most cases it is an idiosyncratic business. The editors, a well-read bunch who only got where they are

today by consuming classics in their youth, discuss what to include. (McDonald did not help to choose the Deutsch list, but approved it.) They do what the potential purchasers do: they wax nostalgic about their favourite reads from their own youth. Then they get hard-headed and consider "longevity" in terms of sales and critical acclaim. (Philipps Milne-Smith of Puffin points out that R.L. Stine's *Goosebumps* series and Enid Blyton will always fall at this fence.)

Sometimes they trawl their own backlists or look for out-of-copy-right books: if a list seems oddly eclectic, this may be why. Then they choose a mix of "boyish" and "girlish" books: supposedly *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* v *What Katy Did*. And they make the books look collectable, with high production standards to suggest quality.

Most of the selected books are ones we have all heard of, arguably because they're so good they have stood the test of time. But often it is

also because they have crept into our culture in other forms. Sometimes they are books we merely think we have read. Everyone knows that Peter Pan is the boy who never grows up. But how many know that Mrs Darling

6 The Disney
generation
thinks
Hercules had
four labours?

tied up her children's minds after they go to sleep, arranging the preter thoughts on top ready to be put on in the morning, with the "evil passions" folded up small at the bottom? Hardly anyone, since this idea cannot be translated from page to stage or screen.

Even an enduring favourite like *The Wind in the Willows* is familiar to many as performance rather than as prose. The plots and characters of classics may be at large in our culture, but they have stepped outside the books.

Sometimes they can surpass their original exposition — the idea of *Swiss Family Robinson* is more potent than its rather leaden prose — but all too often they exist in our imagination in disguise, dressed in layers of other interpretations, solidified in a stage costume with Alan Bennett's voice, or, much worse, redrawn by Disney, no great respecter of sources. (We are breeding a generation, thanks to Disney, that will think Hercules had four labours.) Whatever the virtue of other manifestations of these books in other media, they should not be confused with the originals.

All this is an argument for rediscovering the untainted word-book prototypes. But buyers need to know their readers well, and the

classics themselves, and get the timing right. Some were written for adults (*Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* are among the Puffin Classics), and few are easy, with their 19th-century prose. Many are also less cosy than we tend to assume. Take *Peter Pan* again: Captain Hook's eyes were "of the blue of the forget-me-not, and of a profound melancholy, save when he was plunging his hook into you". Which is nothing to how the villainy of his fellow pirates is described.

It matters that children can read beyond the limitations of contemporary speech, otherwise they are confined to the narrow prison of the here and now. But it also matters, as McDonald acknowledges, that these books are part of a range of reading, some adults fall into the trap of buying off-puttingly difficult texts out of ignorance of what else is good. Newer books may also deserve to be given a chance to enter the cultural vocabulary of the future.

Here's a pretty challenge

DANCE

The *Sleeping Beauty* is a daunting and demanding princess, expecting no half measures from the companies staging her. In 1921 she almost ruined Diaghilev, who had felt that nothing less than unbridled lavishness would be appropriate, while the Royal Ballet's present production cost so much that we are sentenced to see it for many years to come.

English National Ballet had a modest budget by comparison, but Peter Docherty's designs for Ronald Hynd's 1993 staging, now revived and touring, translate economic simplicity into a handsome, colonnaded spaciousness. My only quarrel lies with the cheap polyester-type gold and glitter breaking

out like acne among the costumes — costumes which otherwise successfully juxtapose historical accuracy and fairy-tale fantasy.

The *Sleeping Beauty* also places a huge strain on a company's manpower, not only in terms of numbers, but also ability: given the quantity of difficult solo roles. This meant a fair amount of doubling in Oxford, with first prize going to Alice Crawford who popped up everywhere — Fairy of Ay, Garland Dancer, Nymph, Red Riding Hood. And it meant we could note just how good the company looks: David Wall, Rosalyn Whitten and the other teachers have coached the dancers to make the best of themselves. Although there were no future Margot Fonteyns among the fairies, each danced her variation with an accomplished sense of shape and texture.

The tour marks the return, as guest artists, of the Estonian couple Agnes Oks and Thomas Edu, who are now pursuing a freelance career. The glamour they produce as a pair has contributed to small part to their success. But Edu is also the quintessential prince, the supreme dancer noble, with the silent landings of a cat.

Oaks as Aurora looked charming, but her beautifully proportioned lines lack the stretch and flow to sing. It was also a shame that she attempted only a minimal characterisation. Where Aurora's dances in each act can be considered to represent a different stage in her life's journey — from tender, shy 16-year-old to grand, aristocratic bride — Oks overlooked any development, dancing everything with the same bland poise.

Daria Klimentova danced her exquisite arabesques and firmly centred turns as the Lilac Fairy. Tamara Rojo's delicate clarity shone in the Bluebird as dea, I couldn't see what benefit Craig Randolph's Carabosse derived from brandishing a peacock but I liked the way he flew about on a wire. Hynd's production has a fine, individual touches, but is otherwise satisfyingly straightforward, and the score was well-served under Martin Vest's baton.

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No time to work for anyone else, then? Actually he takes regular classes as head of movement at his alma mater, Mountview Arts Centre.

Tragic hat-trick: Having already directed Brecht and Anouilh's versions of *Antigone*, he is now tackling the Sophocles original, in a new translation by Gwynne Edwards which opens at the Riverside Studios on March 11. "It's such a great, simple story that I'm very happy to be doing it again. The ritualised nature of the play and chorus suit Forbidden's style."

Precocious, huh? "I joined the children's workshops at the Palace Theatre Centre, in Westcliff, when I was five and a year later told my mum and dad that I was going to be an actor. By 16 I was running the Palace workshops."

Pester power: Determined to obtain work experience with the RSC at 17, he rang the company manager every day for three weeks. "He finally gave in and said I could come up to wash costumes and sweep the stage. I did a few hours of that, then spent two weeks sitting in on rehearsals with Sam Mendes and Katie Mitchell."

Changing tack: "At Mountview I trained as an actor but I couldn't reconcile myself to the idea of a career which might involve nine months in something like *Let's Miss*. I realised I was more interested in developing projects and telling other actors what to do — i.e. directing."

Aiming high: "The physical theatre I direct with Forbidden isn't mainstream, but now is it performance art. I'd like to think there might be a place for people like me in subsidised theatre. I'd love to direct Shakespeare with the RSC."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

Strange brew for export

OPERA

There are those who bad-mouth British opera, saying it's all very well in its parochial way but definitely not for export, so the first major production in Germany of Tippet's *Midsummer Marriage*, premiered last week at Munich's National Theatre by the Bavarian State Opera before one of the most sophisticated audiences in the world, was obviously an occasion of great interest. Ages of press coverage and audience reaction suggest an unsurprising outcome: great enthusiasm for the music — how could it be otherwise? — and slight bemusement over the stage action.

The musical side was indeed magnificent: Mark Elder had fired orchestra and chorus with his own belief in the score, and the quality of sound, the accuracy and spirit of the playing were overwhelming. Placing part of the chorus in the stage boxes was a masterstroke: Tippet's great pagan hymns rolled round the auditorium to pole-axing effect. There was little attempt at balance with the stage and words were at a premium, though the excellent cast (Philip Langridge and Lauren Flanagan as Mark and Jennifer, Alison Hagley and Christopher Ventris as Bella and Jack, Catherine Wyn-Rogers as Sosostri) made heroic efforts.

Richard Jones's production was more problematical. Oddly, the more abstract a work, the more representational you somehow want it to be. There was no hint of "this magic wood", of temple, staircase or gate to the underworld. Mark and Jennifer went on their journeys in a silver Hurricane fighter, or via the London Underground. A huge television screen dominated Giles Cudde's economy set and soon, outstayed its welcome, even when dressed with a red

ist hate-figure with spats and a shooting stick and turned into the Fisher King/Ambrosia. Bella didn't look like a secretary, or Jack like a mechanic. Maybe audience shouldn't be spoon-fed, but his one was made to work pretty hard.

Midsummer Marriage (1955) seems mot and more of its time, born in that great surge of postwar optimism betrayed by successive governments. In that context Jones's ending was as hideously ironic as it was apposite. Mark and Jennifer were dressed in morning suit and bridal gown, and ended up in a suburban semi with garden gnomes and two-point-five children. As Britten put it in another context: "Is this it all?"

RODNEY MILNES

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German's intransigence maintains feudal system in Formula One

Schumacher refuses to turn the corner

The shadow of Jerez looms over Melbourne in the build up to the Australian Grand Prix. Kevin Eason reports

The feud that threatens to overshadow the Formula One world championship this season showed little sign of abating yesterday, with Michael Schumacher passing up the opportunity of a reconciliation with Jacques Villeneuve.

Five days before they are due on track in Melbourne for the Australian Grand Prix, they met by chance while on promotional duties in Sydney — their first encounter since their notorious collision in the final race of last season at Jerez. Pre-season discussion has been of little else but that incident, after which the FIA, the governing body of Formula One, stripped Schumacher of his second place in the championship.

Schumacher had an opportunity yesterday to still the turbulence that has engulfed him for the past four months, but in an apparent consolidation of his lofty persona, there was no handshake and definitely no hint of a climbdown. Instead, it was left to Villeneuve to forgive — if not forget.

The Canadian, 26, refused to be drawn on the more intricate details of their private meeting, held over a cup of coffee, but did say: "There was no talk of an apology. No talk of the incident. Not much was said, but for a few months we have only spoken to each other through the papers, so we cleared that out."

"I am not angry about it [the incident], it was what happened afterwards, but there is no point in waking up every day and thinking about it. It won't affect the way I drive."

No compromise, then, on his own aggressive style and certainly no doubt that the German will be as ruthless and unforgiving as ever.

"If you hesitate, you go off," he said. "You either make the decision or you don't. I do expect Michael Schumacher to be quick. Ferrari will not have any excuses this year, which is good."

This is the new, improved



Villeneuve savours the view from the top of the motor racing world, while Schumacher, right, remains a man apart

Villeneuve, relaxed, confident and with nothing to prove. While Schumacher has been shunted into the marketing slow lane, Villeneuve has been grinning that amiable, if slightly unconvincing, grin — like an embarrassed teenager roped into his birthday photograph — at all and sundry.

It was not the most subtle of metaphors, but this week the man at the top of Formula One

even climbed to the top of Sydney Harbour Bridge for a photocall to survey all beneath him.

His equanimity is derived from the knowledge that, in the final reckoning of the Jerez crash, he emerged as world champion, with Schumacher trapped in the gravel and in ignominy.

"I won and he didn't. What have I got to worry about," Villeneuve said with a shrug.

"I feel very much more relaxed this year because when you are trying to be world champion, there is so much pressure. Now I want to win the title again, but that is a different kind of pressure from last year."

Schumacher's reluctance to proffer an olive branch, to cast aside the veil that is obscuring the true recognition of an outstanding talent that has taken him to two

world championships, is mystifying. He has appeared increasingly embattled since being cast in the role as the bad guy in the black hat. He has been castigated by almost every driver, team manager and commentator, with the inevitable consequence that the race on Sunday is being cast as another bitter shoot-out between the gallant, virtuous Villeneuve and his dastardly rival.

Champion takes legislators to task

JACQUES VILLENEUVE swarmed last night that new rules designed to slow down Formula One cars this season could give "mediocre" drivers the chance to win (Kevin Eason writes). The world champion criticised rules that have made the cars narrower and introduced grooved tyres for less grip.

His remarks were an indictment of legislators' attempts to bring the cars closer together so that racing could provide more of a spectacle for the sport's hundreds of millions of television viewers. In particular, overtaking is now far more likely. Villeneuve's view was in direct conflict with the ideas behind the rule changes.

"I reckon our regulations have levelled everything down and mediocre drivers could have the chance of driving well because they are going to reach the limit of the car before they reach their own human limit," he said.

"Last year, sometimes you had to go beyond your own

limits before you reached the limits of the car. I think this is a sport where you have got to be the best to win and a better driver will make a difference to the car. But the new regulations have taken that away a little bit and that is what racing is all about."

However, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, his team-mate, who has to prove himself at Williams this year, disagreed, warning that the cars were more difficult to control.

"There was no talk of an apology. No talk of the incident"

Schofield setting out to widen tour's horizons

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT IN Doha, QATAR

THE boundaries of the PGA European Tour, which already extend to Asia, Australia and South Africa, are about to be widened further to include new countries. If not new continents, "Tournaments in South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia and Abu Dhabi could appear on the schedule in the foreseeable future, so that by the early years of the new millennium the tour will look dramatically different from the way that it did in the 1980s."

Ken Schofield, the executive director of the tour, arrived here yesterday after visiting a potential venue and talking to potential sponsors for a new tournament in Abu Dhabi. "Before I went, I was led to believe it was a magnificent facility and I was not disappointed," Schofield said. "It would be premature to say it is a done deal, but it is encouraging to meet the principals."

The tour, having competed in Dubai last week, has now moved a few hundred miles northwest. The first Qatar Masters is being staged at Doha Golf Club, a private members' club owned by the state of Qatar. With an event at the new Abu Dhabi course, the tour could soon stage three successive tournaments on new and testing courses in the Gulf at a time of year when sunshine is virtually guaranteed.

"I was delighted when the European Tour went from one to two tournaments in the UAE," Schofield said. "Now it

looks as though it might go from two to three."

Schofield said that discussions for an event in Malaysia were well under way and might be included on the schedule as early as 1999. He also revealed that Johnnie Walker, the largest sponsor in golf in Europe, is anxious to move its Classic tournament, which has traditionally been the opening event of the season, towards the end of the year. This will enable it to be staged in places such as South Korea or Taiwan, where weather remains satisfactory at that time of the year.

Schofield will meet representatives from the South African, Australian and Omega (Asian) tours in Jacksonville, Florida, during the Players Championship at the end of the month to try to work out a revised schedule, so that the four tours mesh together better. He foresees a time when the European Tour will start with a run of events in South Africa and then move to Australia, instead of the Australian events preceding those in South Africa, as happens at present.

"I would love the European Tour to be stronger without having to go abroad," José María Olazábal said. "On the other hand, we are all very international now and if we can't play in Europe in January, February and March, we have to play abroad. If we have to leave Europe during the early part of the season, then we must do it."

HOCKEY

England target bronze

ENGLAND lost 1-0 to Germany in the Sultan Azlan Shah tournament in Ipoh, Malaysia, yesterday (Sydney Friskin writes). However, with two matches to be played against New Zealand and Malaysia, they have a good chance of finishing high enough to compete in the play-off for a bronze medal.

The match yesterday was settled within two minutes of the start when Blumck, the German captain, unleashed a fierce, reverse-stick shot

from the top of the circle. England rarely looked like scoring. They had four short corners, all of which were badly handled, while Sharpe missed a good chance from open play.

ENGLAND: S. Moore, B. Russell, J. Hall, J. Miller, M. Wright (captain), J. Hogg, N. Thompson, M. Peen, B. Williams (sub). AUSTRALIA: A. Hargreave, J. May, R. Birch, M. Marshall (captain). GERMANY: N. Kowalski, M. Green, A. Latta, J. P. Jones, M. Gray, P. Bakkenboom, C. Meunier, C. Esler, J. Wiedemann, C. Blumck (captain), O. Dorn, S. Subotnik (sub). NEW ZEALAND: P. Crane, M. Schreiber, S. Barrett. MALAYSIA: J. Wright (captain), J. Smith and J. Lee (sub). (Sydney Friskin)

EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

THE TIMES

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GROUP A DRIVERS		
01 Damon Hill	06 Jacques Villeneuve	09 Mika Häkkinen
02 Michael Schumacher	04 Olivier Panis	10 Juan Pablo Montoya
03 David Coulthard	07 Heinz-Harald Frentzen	11 Rubens Barrichello
04 Giancarlo Fisichella	08 Eddie Irvine	

GROUP B DRIVERS		
12 Alexander Wurz	16 Mika Salo	20 Ricardo Rosset
13 Ralf Schumacher	17 Pedro Diniz	21 Shinya Monishi
14 Jarno Trulli	18 Jan Magnussen	22 Esteban Tuero
15 Johnny Herbert	19 Toranosuke Takagi	

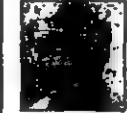
GROUP C CONSTRUCTORS		GROUP D CONSTRUCTORS	
23 Williams	26 McLaren	29 Sauber	32 Tyrrell
24 Ferrari	27 Jordan	30 Arrows	33 Minardi
25 Benetton	28 Prost	31 Stewart	

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CHANGING TIMES



SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Pre-emptive bidding can make life very difficult for the opposition during the auction but if the pre-emptor ends up defending declarer often has a big advantage because of the information he can take from the pre-empt. This deal from the qualifying stage of the 1997 Bermuda Bowl is a case in point.

Dealer North	Love all	IMPs
♠ AK742 ♥ 84 ♦ A1086 ♣ A4 ♠ Q986 ♥ AQ9832 ♦ 75 ♣ Q	♠ 103 ♥ J10 ♦ 92 ♣ K107652 ♠ J8 ♥ K75 ♦ KQJ43 ♣ 983	

W	N	E	S
Pass	TE 4C	SCD Double	SD Pass
All Pass	4D	Pass	5D

Contract Five Diamonds by South. Lead: queen of clubs

(1) Weak. Paul Thurston of Canada won the club lead and cashed a top trump in hand. Then he played ace, king and a third spade, ruffing. The 4-2 spade break was bad news but declarer wasn't finished yet. He led a trump to dummy followed by a fourth round of spades on which he pitched a club. West won the spade and, down to nothing, but hearts had to concede the contract.

Had West played ace and another heart, declarer would have won the king, ruffed the third heart in dummy and pitched his last club on the long spade. West did better than that, underleading his ace of hearts. The heart went

to the ten and king and had declarer now played a second heart it could have been won by East, who would then have cashed a club for one down.

But declarer simply won the heart king, crossed to dummy with a trump and threw his club on the spade before giving up a heart. The heart ruff in dummy was his eleventh trick.

Without the Three Club overcall, the winning line would never even have occurred to declarer, it being far more normal just to play for the heart ace to be on side.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

By Philip Howard

RESGAT
a. To disown
b. Ransom
c. A Muslim pilot

RHABDOSOPHY
a. A Babylonian judge
b. Learning by silence
c. Sticky wisdom

PROA
a. A sponsor
b. Prematurely proactive
c. A boat

RHINOBATID
a. A shark ray
b. Propelling by the nose
c. A fungal growth

Answers on page 41



KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Queen sacrifice

Peter Swidler, the Russian grandmaster, is the least experienced of the contestants in the elite tournament at Linares, Spain. Far from being overawed, Swidler, three times the Russian champion, has played with great self-confidence. In today's game, a difficult manoeuvring battle, Swidler gradually gains terrain and finishes with an annihilating queen sacrifice which tears the heart out of the black position.

White: Peter Swidler
Black: Vassily Ivanchuk
Linares 1998

Sicilian Defence	
1. e4	c5
2. d4	cxd4
3. exd4	g6
4. Nf3	Bg7
5. O-O	O-O
6. Bc4	Qc7
7. Qd2	Rd8
8. Nc3	Nc6
9. Bb3	Ne5
10. Bg5	b5
11. Bxh6	Nxh6
12. Qd3	Qd6
13. Qd4	Qd7
14. Qd5	Qd8
15. Qd6	Qd7
16. Qd7	Qd8
17. Qd8	Qd7
18. Qd7	Qd8
19. Qd8	Qd7
20. Qd7	Qd8
21. Qd8	Qd7
22. Qd7	Qd8
23. Qd8	Qd7
24. Qd7	Qd8
25. Qd8	Qd7
26. Qd7	Qd8
27. Qd8	Qd7
28. Qd7	Qd8
29. Qd8	Qd7
30. Qd7	Qd8
31. Qd8	Qd7
32. Qd7	Qd8
33. Qd8	Qd7

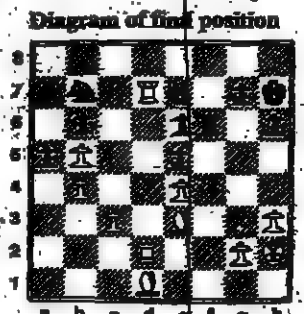


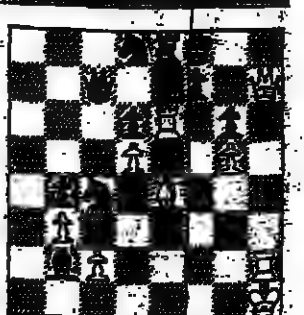
Diagram of final position

Linares update
In the eighth round of the elite tournament in Linares, Spain, all games ended as draws! Alexei Shirov therefore maintains his slight lead overall.

Times book

The Times Weekend Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in The Times, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01376 32127) at £6.99 plus postage and packing.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.



Solution on page 41

Making a pitch that results in the perfect match

Cricket experts are agreed on two matters: first, that the past three Test matches between England and West Indies have produced the most riveting cricket possible and, second, they have been played on extremely poor pitches. Bad pitches, in fact.

It is perfectly possible, in a series that is relentlessly probing the psychological make-up of two teams each with their fair share of troubles, that England will win the next match, leaving us with an all-to-play-for sixth. It is perfectly possible that, in terms of thrills and turnarounds and shifting advantage, we are in the middle of the greatest series ever played.

Have these genuine sporting pleasures come our way in spite of the badness of the pitches? Certainly not. A cricket match, most especially one between equally matched sides,

is the pitch. Or at least, how players respond to it. This has been a magnificent series: clearly, then, it has been played on magnificent pitches.

Or do you prefer a Test match played on what is generally termed a Good Pitch? The last time that England played in Antigua, they played on a Good Pitch. It was so good that the match was tedious, meaningless and drawn. Both teams scored 593 in the first innings and, er, that's it. In all, 15 wickets fell in the match and Lara gourmandised his meaningless 375.

A Good Pitch, a bad match. It was Good Pitches that ruined the last series when West Indies came to England. For a while, it was an absolutely riveting series, 2-2 after four Tests. But Good Pitches killed it. The last two matches were the dulllest of dull draws. Batsmen

gorged, especially Lara, bowlers toiled. It was great batting; it was poor sport.

All over the world, grounds-men are trying to make Good Pitches. It is fortunate for cricket-watchers that this is a fiendishly difficult task. If the grounds-men of the world all succeeded simultaneously in their aim, it would be the death of cricket.

Odd fact: you hardly ever get a Good Pitch or a bad match at Headingley. Odd fact: it is the Headingley grounds-men who is always in trouble.

Who, then, is a Good Pitch actually good for? Obviously, it is

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

good for batsmen — and that is where this confusion about Goodness and Badness all springs from, for cricket is the most English of games. That is to say, it is about Class. Batsmen represent the rich and privileged, bowlers the toiling masses and back in the days of gentlemen and players, by and large gentlemen were batsmen, players bowlers.

Naturally, in the real world, the rich stay rich at the expense of the poor. From the point of view of the rich, everything that keeps society stable is Good. Everything that tends to shake society is Bad. That is how political and

economic expediency get confused with morality.

Here, enshrined in the customs of an arcane game, we find the same confusion. What is good for General Motors is good for the United States; what is good for batsmen is good for cricket. Of course, both statements are nonsense.

Good cricket is not about the balance of bat and ball, it is about their volatile and perpetually changing relationship over five days, over the three months of a Test series. One day, Lara is stroking his team to victory; a few days later, Cork is moving down

West Indian batsmen for him. One week, West is bowling murderously; the next, Thorpe is dispatching him to all corners.

There is ancient notion that it is a groundsman's job to produce a shirt-front. This was certainly a wise move when batsmen were paying

your wages, but this archaic view remains in place so that to prepare a pitch that suits bowlers is seen at best as incompetence, at worst a form of cheating.

Batsmen shall prosper, that is what cricket means. Every Law of the game permeates that notion: benefit of the doubt, no-balls, bumpers, padding up. But there is one term that is used grudgingly and not all that frequently, and seldom without irony and that is Sporting Pitch. That is to say, a pitch that gives the bowlers a little encouragement, but on which very good batsmen can make runs. Like Headingley, like Port of Spain.

It is a pitch on which bat and ball have a volatile and shifting relationship, a pitch on which the best of cricket, of sport, is possible. Good Pitches, like the class system, have their place in the dustbins of history.

The pitch was so good the game was tedious

Chairman resigns in protest at recall of Wasim

BY SIMON WILDE AND NO TERNANT

WASIM AKRAM's unexpected call to join his Pakistan colleagues on their tour of southern Africa has caused as much bewilderment in his own country as elsewhere — not least among the national selectors supposedly charged with taking such decisions. Salim Akhtar, the chairman of selectors, has resigned in protest.

Responsibility for Wasim's restoration has been placed at the door of Khalid Mahmood, recently elevated to the position of chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), who, it is suspected, took the decision against all advice.

After Wasim led his country to a crushing defeat of West Indies late last year, it appeared to be a formality that he would go to South Africa as captain, but failure in a one-day tournament in Sharjah caused renewed whispers about match-fixing and Wasim to grow disenchanted with the PCB. However, it was his suspect fitness that encouraged Salim and his fellow selectors to overlook him altogether.

"Wasim's call-up has caused controversy, but that is his doing, not the board's," Majid Khan, the chief executive of the PCB, said yesterday. "He pulled out of a tournament in Bangladesh in January because he was unfit and, at the time the team was being chosen for South Africa, failed to complete a four-day match for PIA (Pakistan International Airlines, his club in Pakistan). The selectors felt that if he could not do that, how would he survive a three-month tour?"

There is a feeling here that Wasim remains under a cloud. There is also surprise at his call-up. After all, there are 16 fit players in South Africa, five of them fast bowlers, the younger players have done well and the team has just won without him. What is the point?

Wasim, who has been in England preparing for his first season as captain of Lancashire, is expected to be in the side for the third and final Test match against South Africa on Friday. He has been widely criticised for his slow start to the series. They will then play two Tests in Zimbabwe.

There was no sign of Wasim in South Africa yesterday. The captain and vice-captain, claimed that he would be coming today. The tour party's management simply had no knowledge of his movements.

Sussex plan to break new ground

SUSSEX are considering a ground-share with Brighton and Hove Albion in an attempt to resolve the Nationwide League third division clubs' plight since they sold the "Goldstone" Ground two years ago.

Brighton have held talks with Sussex about setting up a new multi-sports site including a football stadium and cricket ground. Brighton are at present playing at Priestfield, the home of Gillingham, which is 73 miles away, and are trying to gain consent to switch to the athletics stadium at Withdean. Brighton, as a temporary measure for next season.

Tony Pigott, the Sussex chief executive, said: "We have been having meetings with Brighton and the local council could also be a major player. It's a long way down the line at this stage, but we are looking at all the various options. Sussex have ruled out the possibility of carrying out improvements at Hove, where they have played for more than a century."

Alan Butcher has been appointed the Surrey Second XI coach. Butcher, 44, was on the staff at the Oval from 1972 to 1986 as an opening batsman, before joining Glamorgan where he became captain. He played for England once, against India in 1979.

Butcher, father of Mark, the Surrey and England batsman, has recently been working at the Essex Second XI coach. He will also work with the Surrey youth development team during the winter.

Mike Demessie, the former Kent and England captain, has been re-elected to the county's general committee for another three-year term, along with Derek Upton, the cricket committee chairman, and Peter Egleby, the touring president.

CRICKET

England coach refuses to dwell on defeat

FROM ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT, IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

THERE have been times when defeat has had a deep and disturbing effect on David Lloyd, when his expressions — facial and verbal — have betrayed anger, resentment or recrimination. Not yesterday. The England coach was bright-eyed at the breakfast table, bantering about music and horse racing in such a way that it was almost possible to forget that his team had just lost a Test match by 242 runs.

Highly-strung and passionate, Lloyd would make a poor poker player. The bluff is not his style and even his silences are loaded with meaning. This does not mean, however, that his management methods are one-dimensional and his chipper mood in Georgetown yesterday was an interesting variation on a theme.

When England suffered their first defeat in this gripping series in Trinidad early last month, Lloyd took a night to consider his tactics, then calculatingly criticised two members of his side. He waited for the reaction before calling a team meeting where every player was encouraged to air grievances. It was unconventional management, but the next Test was won.

Here in Guyana, he sees things differently. The defeat was far heavier than in Trinidad — indeed, there was never a moment when England seemed capable of winning — but it has not seemed so harsh, so hard to take. Lloyd, for one, is philosophical.

To his way of thinking, England were in the equivalent position of a man tied to a railway line with the express approaching. After losing the toss on a dusty oval of a pitch, they were always going to need great strength and ingenuity to escape the onrushing menace of Ambrose and Walsh. They did not show enough of either.

"The appreciable difference in the pace and height of their bowlers is something we have to live with, but it was highlighted on that pitch. I feel both teams got their selection right for the conditions, but they exploited them far better than we did," Lloyd said.

"While that is disappointing, it's not so surprising. Alec Stewart will tell you he's never faced Ambrose bowling quicker than he did here. The big two are a handful and, on this occasion, they were too much for us."

Ambrose and Walsh are unarguably intimidating opponents and their impact on the series has been greater than anyone could logically have anticipated while both were considering retirement back in January. Never-



Atherton: short of runs

less, it is worth saying that their combined tally of 37 wickets in the series is exactly matched by Fraser and Headley, of England. The difference between the teams is, not them alone, here, for instance, it was in the batting. Lloyd would be unwise to sweep all the evidence under the team-room carpet and he knows it. This was not a good pitch, but neither did it make batting impossible and scores of 170 and 137 were unacceptably low. England's

'Innings of 170 and 137 were unacceptably low'

highest total in the series is a meagre 258, their average runs per wicket a revealing 19.43. Atherton, Hussain and Thorpe — three of the four senior players — have one half-century between them.

"We didn't play at our maximum, of course we didn't," Lloyd admitted. "A few of our batsmen have not made many runs. With players of their calibre, you expect a significant innings to be just around the corner and, if we won the toss, I'd like to think



Lloyd: looking forward

we'd have seen one or two. There is no moping. Straight after the game, as soon as we were back in the dressing-room, I was at pains to say to the fellows that this game is finished, forgotten. We just look forward now. Everyone in the team would agree we are every bit as good as them and the mood is of rolling up the sleeves and getting back at them in Barbados."

In the eight days before the series resumes in Bridgetown, talk will be dominated, as ever, by the shape of the two teams. Lloyd says he has not even thought about it yet, which naturally is nonsense, and that the players will probably not practice again until Friday, the eve of a three-day game against Barbados.

He did offer a few clues. "I would think all the batsmen would want to play in the Barbados game," he ventured, suggesting that Atherton's plan to take a match off had already fallen victim to his run shortage. Then, casting further ahead, Lloyd added: "The pitches there are usually a bit quicker, so it's a fair bet that we might revert to our original balance with three seamers in the next Test."

What this would mean for Jack Russell is a matter of fevered conjecture. The wicketkeeping argument has often polarised opinion. Right now, with Russell struggling so painfully, even those of us who have continually supported his inclusion are finding it hard to justify.

The quirky positions he adopts, his body pointing towards area cover, must surely help explain his limitations on the leg side, but the scruffiness of his routine glove-work is now impossible to ignore.

There is mitigation, because the pitches here are so fickle in bounce, it is much the most difficult place in the world to keep wicket and David Williams has been no idler for West Indies. Yet, with a mere 49 runs in the series, Russell no longer even has his batting to promote his cause.

Lloyd remains reluctant to jettison him and it is easy to see why. "It's a hell of an event keeping wicket here. It's hot and uncomfortable. Do we tell Stewart to cope with that, then ask him to go out and open the batting, expecting him to make a hundred? That's the overriding consideration."

Four years ago, Stewart made a century in each of the two Tests and England won gloriously. He was not keeping wicket. That thought will lodge in many a mind over the coming days, as England seek a way back into this series.

Jack refuses to act the rabbit

Simon Wilde explains why the game's tail-enders are proving far more difficult to dislodge

I f Michael Atherton is having difficulty sleeping after England's frustrating defeat by West Indies in Georgetown, there might be an obvious reason. Rather than counting sheep, the England captain could be forgiven for clocking up the rabbits — or tail-end batsmen — who have cost his side dear in recent times.

While it would be wrong to attribute England's reversal in the fourth Test match solely to the tenth-wicket stand between Ian Bishop and Dinanath Ramnarine, there is no doubt that their combined resistance — which lasted for 105 minutes, survived numerous escapes during its course and yielded 70 vital runs — set the tone for the fourth day on Monday. England were later dismissed inside two sessions for 137.

Though Bishop has two first-class centuries to his name, Ramnarine, whose career average before this winter was 16.27, is a novice and should have presented England with few difficulties. But, as has happened of late overseas, Atherton found himself thwarted by a resourceful No 11.

Twelve months ago, it was Danny Morrison, who boasted the largest number of wickets to his name in Test history, who held him up for nearly three hours in Auckland before New Zealand, safe from defeat, brought an end to England's misery by declaring. When Morrison first joined Nathan Aspinall, New Zealand led by only 11 runs.

A year earlier, the unlikely heroics of Paul Adams, the South Africa No 11, in the final Test at Cape Town undeniably cost England the series. His audacious last-wicket stand of 73 with David Richardson gives his side a significant first-innings lead of 91 in a low-scoring match. Adams, then 18, had previously faced only 16 balls in his brief first-class career.

In fact, it is not only the England bowlers who are having trouble polishing off the tailenders. Stubborn and productive lower-order stands are no longer uncommon in Test cricket and, in the past five months, a South African pair — Pat Symcox and Mark Boucher, at Johannesburg — has set a record for the ninth wicket and two Pakistanis equalled the highest partnership for the tenth wicket.

"In the old days, tailenders did not sell their wickets as



Ramnarine swings productively to leg during his last-wicket partnership with Bishop, which yielded 70 runs and frustrated England for 105 minutes

dearly as they do now." Clive Radley, the MCC head coach, said yesterday. "Nine, ten and jack did not seem to mind going out and having a slog and finishing up with a career average in single figures. Now they have coaches on their backs telling them to get their heads down."

"I think a lot of it is in the mind, rather than any intrinsic improvement in the quality of the players. I spend more

time with tailenders on their batting than coaches used to and the typical tailender expects to work harder on his technique and hold up an end."

One of the strategies that modern Test sides adopt is to assign a tailender to a specialist batsman, whose responsibility it is to bring on his charge's batting.

Steve Waugh has achieved notable success with the once hapless Glenn McGrath for Australia and it is a policy that England are pursuing in the West Indies.

Cynics might question the wisdom of this, but there have been benefits. Phil Tufnell, a greatly improved No 11, remained at the crease for more than an hour in the first innings at Georgetown and added 30 with Robert Croft.

"There seems to be a general realisation that 30 or 40 runs can be rustled up at the end of the innings, which can turn out to be the difference between winning and losing," Radley added. "It is obvious



Morrison: duck record



Adams: batting novice

FULL SCOREBOARD FROM GEORGETOWN

West Indies won toss		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
WEST INDIES: First innings		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
S.L. Campbell c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
S.C. Hooper c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
B.C. Lara c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
S. Chandrasekhar c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
J.C. Adams c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
D.R. Mendenhall c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
C.E. Ambrose c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
R.D. Groot c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
D.W. Haynes c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
WEST INDIES: Second innings		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
S.L. Campbell c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34		35		36		37		38		39		40		41		42		43		44		45		46		47		48		49		50		51		52		53		54		55		56		57		58		59		60		61		62		63		64		65		66		67		68		69		70		71		72		73		74		75		76		77		78		79		80		81		82		83		84		85		86		87		88		89		90		91		92		93		94		95		96		97		98		99		100	
S.C. Hooper c Russell b Hooper		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31		32		33		34																																																																																																																																					

FOOTBALL

Macari on course for return at Sheffield

BY RICHARD HOBSON

LOU MACARI could make a return to league management with Sheffield United before the weekend. The Nationwide League first division club is keen to appoint an experienced successor to Nigel Spackman, who resigned late on Monday ahead of the club's FA Cup quarter-final tie at Coventry City on Saturday.

The passage cleared for Macari yesterday when Brian Little and Frank Clark declared themselves out of the running. Ian Rush, on loan from Newcastle United, has managerial ambitions, but not the experience required by the board.

Macari stepped down as manager of Stoke City at the end of last season to pursue a claim for £400,000 in damages against Celtic, which dated back to his sacking by the Glasgow club in June 1994. The court failed to find in his favour and he is presently employed as a scout by Nottingham Forest.

For their part, United, who placed Steve Thompson and Russell Slade, the coaches, in temporary charge for the game against Ipswich Town last night, are keen to act swiftly to ensure that the drive for a place in the promotion play-offs does not lose impetus.

In a withering personal attack, Mike McDonald, the club chairman, suggested that Spackman, the former Bournemouth, Chelsea, Liverpool and Glasgow Rangers midfielder player, had lost his nerve after the departure of Willie Donachie, the chief coach, to become assistant to Joe Royle at Manchester City two weeks ago.

McDonald said: "The fact that he resigned on the eve of two critical games and the

announcement on Thursday of Sheffield United's interim accounts has made it very difficult for the club. Spackman was never the same after Donachie left. When the pressure came, he could not cope. On his own, he was just not experienced enough to handle it."

"I was pushed into giving him a chance after we lost Howard Kendall. Nigel got the job even though I was not 100 per cent sold on him and I have been proved right. Now he has put his own self-interest before the club and no one can forgive him for that."

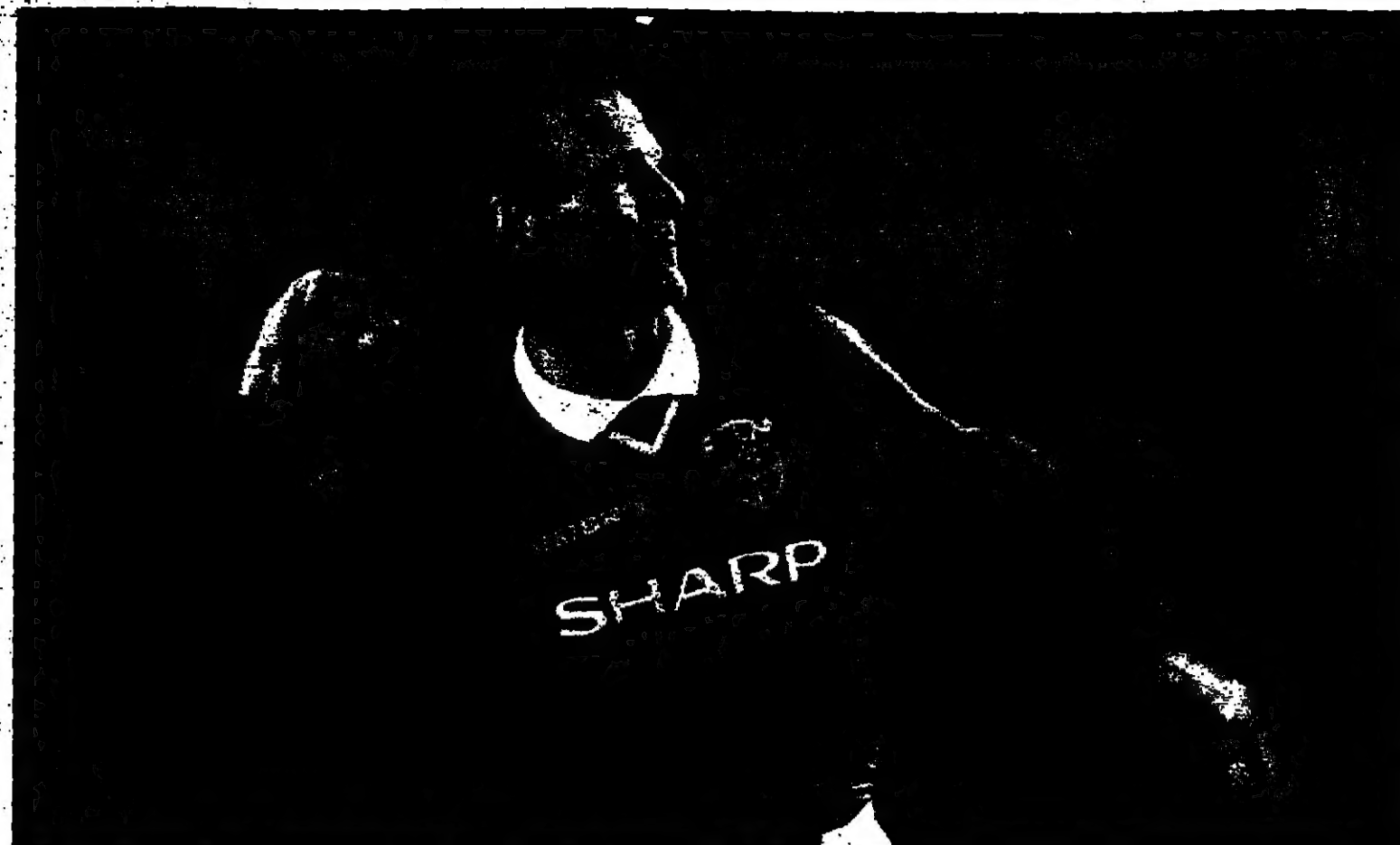
The club floundered on the Stock Exchange in January last year, but the value of its shares has slipped gradually from a high of 115 pence to around a third of that value. Spackman became increasingly disillusioned at having to sell players with strings for a place in the FA Cup Premiership.

He sold Brian Deane to Benfica and Jan Åge Fjørtoft to Barnsley on the same day in January. A combined total of £1.3 million was received from the sales, but Deane, a free transfer from Forest, and later, Rush, Carl Tiler and Mitch Ward, departed for Everton in November and Don Hutchison joined them at Goodison Park last week.

In the nine months since succeeding Kendall, Spackman emerged as one of the brightest young managers in the game, a reputation that is unlikely to be tarnished by the comments of McDonald. He led the club to fifth place and will remain as a player until his contract expires at the end of the season.

Charles Green, the chief executive, said that Spackman's resignation was not a complete surprise. "He did not sign the new contract offered to him. We have never made progress with it, so in many ways the concept of the club was crystallised by his decision," he said.

George Graham, the Leeds United manager, is angry at the failure of Lucas Radebe to return from African Nations Cup duty with South Africa in time for the club's match with Tottenham Hotspur tonight. Radebe played in his country's 2-0 defeat by Egypt in the final on Saturday but his whereabouts last night was a mystery.



Sheringham's intelligent forward play has been an important weapon in the United armoury this season. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Sheringham provides striking difference

When Manchester United were shaken from their European Cup dream by Borussia Dortmund last spring, it led to a sweeping reappraisal of their prospects of winning the trophy that they covet more than any other. Perhaps because he had played particularly poorly in the second leg of the semi-final, many decided United could not evolve any further with a gently declining Eric Cantona bestriding the team. And when the summer came, he left.

In his place, instead of the appointed heir, Paul Scholes, there came Teddy Sheringham. For a short time, he struggled to adapt to the pace and fury of United's passing, but gradually he settled into his unhurried rhythm. When he scored a crucial equaliser in the 3-2 Champions' League victory over Juventus in October, everyone knew his assimilation was complete.

Yesterday, as United com-

pleted their preparations for their quarter-final encounter with AS Monaco tonight, the analysis of Sheringham's contribution was taken to another level. From Alex Ferguson, the United manager, and Jean Tigana, the Monaco coach, the message seemed to be that the first part of the mission had been achieved, that United were now capable of more than they had been with Cantona.

The most obvious benefit that Sheringham has brought to the team is the liberation of Andy Cole, a striker who laboured in the shadow of the Erechman and appeared to be treated by him with something approaching contempt. In the company of Sheringham, though, Cole has blossomed into one of the best all-round strikers in the FA Cup Premiership.

'He is not a twin of Cantona, but there are similarities in the way they play, in their positional play'

Oliver Holt meets the Manchester United player laying to rest one of the legends of Old Trafford

Sheringham, who had never played in European club competition before this season, has shied away from comparisons with Cantona in the past, but yesterday he and Ferguson were happy to acknowledge similarities in influence between the two and Ferguson hinted that his England forward had given the team an extra dimension.

"From the first minute as soon as Eric left," Sheringham said, "I felt there was a position for me to slot into at United. I thought to myself

'I'm not Eric Cantona, but I would love to go and play with those players.' When I read the manager's comments that he would not be paying £6 million for a 31-year-old, then my thoughts turned away from Old Trafford, but luckily it worked out."

"I have formed a good partnership with Andy Cole. He is unbelievable. He showed that in the goals he scored at Newcastle. It was just a matter of him getting a run in the side and feeling confident. He likes to get the ball in and around the box and, once he gets one on one, it is game over."

At his press conference deep inside the Stade Louis II, Tigana identified Sheringham yesterday as "the one who regulates most of United's play. He is one of

their most intelligent players." An hour before, Ferguson, too, had paid glowing tribute to him.

"He has just fitted in so easily," Ferguson said. "He had an initial spell when he did not realise the intensity of Manchester United games. He has been a terrific replacement for Eric Cantona. He's not that. He is not a twin of Cantona in the sense that he is an identical player, but there are some similarities in the way they play, in their positional play."

"Teddy has maybe given us a little bit more in that he is always looking to be in an attacking position for crosses. He is very good in the air. Eric was excellent in the air but he didn't always see the necessity to be on the end of crosses all the time."

Tonight — and in the rest of the matches that stretch out towards the European Cup final — Sheringham will have the chance to justify his manager's praise.

Jamaica to bring carnival atmosphere to QPR

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

JAMAICA, who were last month denied the chance to play in London in the World Cup finals in France this summer, will now get their wish after it was announced that they will face Queens Park Rangers at Loftus Road on March 22.

The team dubbed 'The Reggae Boyz' had hoped to play Ireland at the West London ground as part of their World Cup preparations, but last month the Football Association refused

permission. Now, though, a full-strength side will be the attraction as part of Simon Barker's testimonial. Barker, the midfielder player who has been with QPR for ten years, said: "I'm absolutely delighted Jamaica are coming. It was something the Jamaicans wanted to do because of the incredible support they have in this part of the world." Horace Burrell, president of the Jamaican Football Federation, said: "It will be a great occasion and the first time a Jamaican side has played in England."

It was not all good news for the Nationwide League first division club yesterday, however. Paul Murray, Rangers' England B midfielder player, will miss the rest of the season after breaking his leg in two places against Norwich City on Saturday.

Terry Venables, the former England coach, said yesterday that the Australian football federation would not stand in his way if he decides to join Crystal Palace as manager. Venables has told the struggling FA Cup Premiership club that he will decide

within the next week whether he wants to take over from Steve Coppell at Selhurst Park. He is still under contract to the Australian FA, but insisted that David Hill, the head of Soccer Australia, would allow him to take another job.

Brazil, the world champions, will undergo a managerial shake-up in the next few days when a technical coordinator is appointed, but Mario Zagallo, their much-criticised coach, is expected to remain in the job at least until after the World Cup finals.

Chelsea braced for loss of Wise

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

CHELSEA'S preparations for the final stages of a turbulent season, beginning with the first leg of their Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final tie against Real Betis in Seville tomorrow night, continued to go less than smoothly yesterday.

As the team tried to shake off the effects of a demoralising defeat by Manchester United that all but ruled them out of the FA Cup Premiership title equation, the Football Association was announcing that Dennis Wise, their captain, is to be brought before a disciplinary hearing after becoming the first player in the FA Premier League to accumulate 11 bookings this season.

The former England midfielder player was shown the yellow card during the tetchy confrontation with United at Stamford Bridge on Saturday and the realisation that Wise may now miss several important matches put a further damper on a Chelsea season that promised so much but has lost impetus since the abrupt exit of Rudd Gullit.

Wise has already served two suspensions this season, missing three and two matches respectively, and another potential absence will have been noted by Middlesbrough, Chelsea's opponents in the Coca-Cola Cup final, and the rest of the Premiership pack chasing second place and a lucrative ticket to the European Cup Champions' League.

The loss of a player whose commitment has been an essential ingredient of the Chelsea midfield would be keenly felt should the team progress beyond the tie against a Real Betis side that has lacked consistency in the Spanish League but contains match-winning ability in abundance.

With Gianluca Vialli struggling to fill the boots of the departed player-manager, the Italian was dealt a setback yesterday in his plans to build on the foundations laid by Gullit when Didier Deschamps, a former colleague at Juventus, extended his contract in Turin to 2001.

The France captain said: "I've been annoyed by all this speculation, but it's not a problem. Moving away would make no sense to me. The club has given me everything I've asked for and I feel that I've still got a lot to win with Juventus."

One move confirmed yesterday, however, was that of Mark Stein, 32, the Chelsea forward, who will finish the season on loan trying to attain a promotion play-off place with Bournemouth, of the Nationwide League second division.

BOWLS

Vincent champions new cause

BY DAVID RHYNS JONES

BERYL VINCENT defeated Pat Pearce 2-6 in the final of the English women's Championship of Champions singles at Bournemouth resort, near Great Yarmouth, yesterday, then benched the fact that she will not be able to defend her title next year. Vincent was eligible to take part in the event this week as champion of the Teignbridge club, which overlooks the racecourse at Newton Abbot, but she has already lost in the club's championship this season.

"To be honest, I haven't been playing all that well at home, so the fact that the carpet here is much slower than at Teignbridge probably helped me," she said. "It's disappointing that I will not be able to enter next year," she added. "It would be nice if they seeded the winner through to the final stages, but I'll just have to try to get through in one of the other events."

Vincent conceded only 17 shots in her two games yesterday, defeating Gloria Haney, from Spalding, 2-11 in the semi-final, then beating Pearce 2-6 in a one-sided final.

In the pairs, Norma Craig and Ann Lennie, from the Eldon club in Newcastle, will face Brenda Bailey and Di Whittingham, from Preston, in one semi-final, and in the other Brenda Mark and Carol Pollington, from Diss, won the quarter-finals, then defeated Jean Smith and Ann Harrison, from Folkestone, the runners-up last year, in the quarter-finals, will take on Jane Rowntree and Gloria Thomas, the 1983 champions, from West Cornwall.

BASKETBALL

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Washington 88, LA Lakers 82; Charlotte 112, Golden State 82; Detroit 100, Dallas 94; San Antonio 118, Sacramento 94. PLAYOFFS: Eastern Conference: Orlando 101, Cleveland 81; Detroit 97, Boston 82. Western Conference: Phoenix 101, Los Angeles 82; Portland 97, Utah 82.

HOUSTON ON-SEAS: English women's indoor championships. The final: First Queens-Breake Club (A) 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23, 24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30-31, 32-33, 34-35, 36-37, 38-39, 40-41, 42-43, 44-45, 46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55, 56-57, 58-59, 60-61, 62-63, 64-65, 66-67, 68-69, 70-71, 72-73, 74-75, 76-77, 78-79, 80-81, 82-83, 84-85, 86-87, 88-89, 90-91, 92-93, 94-95, 96-97, 98-99, 100-101, 102-103, 104-105, 106-107, 108-109, 110-111, 112-113, 114-115, 116-117, 118-119, 120-121, 122-123, 124-125, 126-127, 128-129, 130-131, 132-133, 134-135, 136-137, 138-139, 140-141, 142-143, 144-145, 146-147, 148-149, 150-151, 152-153, 154-155, 156-157, 158-159, 160-161, 162-163, 164-165, 166-167, 168-169, 170-171, 172-173, 174-175, 176-177, 178-179, 180-181, 182-183, 184-185, 186-187, 188-189, 190-191, 192-193, 194-195, 196-197, 198-199, 200-201, 202-203, 204-205, 206-207, 208-209, 210-211, 212-213, 214-215, 216-217, 218-219, 220-221, 222-223, 224-225, 226-227, 228-229, 230-231, 232-233, 234-235, 236-237, 238-239, 240-241, 242-243, 244-245, 246-247, 248-249, 250-251, 252-253, 254-255, 256-257, 258-259, 260-261, 262-263, 264-265, 266-267, 268-269, 270-271, 272-273, 274-275, 276-277, 278-279, 280-281, 282-283, 284-285, 286-287, 288-289, 290-291, 292-293, 294-295, 296-297, 298-299, 300-301, 302-303, 304-305, 306-307, 308-309, 310-311, 312-313, 314-315, 316-317, 318-319, 320-321, 322-323, 324-325, 326-327, 328-329, 330-331, 332-333, 334-335, 336-337, 338-339, 340-341, 342-343, 344-345, 346-347, 348-349, 350-351, 352-353, 354-355, 356-357, 358-359, 360-361, 362-363, 364-365, 366-367, 368-369, 370-371, 372-373, 374-375, 376-377, 378-379, 380-381, 382-383, 384-385, 386-387, 388-389, 390-391, 392-393, 394-395, 396-397, 398-399, 400-401, 402-403, 404-405, 406-407, 408-409, 410-411, 412-413, 414-415, 416-417, 418-419, 420-421, 422-423, 424-425, 426-427, 428-429, 430-431, 432-433, 434-435, 436-437, 438-439, 440-441, 442-443, 444-445, 446-447, 448-449, 450-451, 452-453, 454-455, 456-457, 458-459, 460-461, 462-463, 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908-909, 910-911, 912-913, 914-915, 916-917, 918-919, 920-921, 922-923, 924-925, 926-927, 928-929, 930-931, 932-933, 934-935, 936-937, 938-939, 940-941, 942-943, 944-945, 946-947, 948-949, 950-951, 952-953, 954-955, 956-957, 958-959, 960-961, 962-963, 964-965, 966-967, 968-969, 970-971, 972-973, 974-975, 976-977, 978-979, 980-981, 982-983, 984-985, 986-987, 988-989, 990-991, 992-993, 994-995, 996-997, 998-999, 1000-1001, 1002-1003, 1004-1005, 1006-1007, 1008-1009, 1010-1011, 1012-1013, 1014-1015, 1016-1017, 1018-1019, 1020-1021, 1022-1023, 1024-1025, 1026-1027, 1028-1029, 1030-1031, 1032-1033, 1034-1035, 1036-1037, 1038-1039, 1040-1041, 1042-1043, 1044-1045, 1046-1047, 1048-1049, 1050-1051, 1052-1053, 1054-1055, 1056-1057, 1058-1059, 1060-1061, 1062-1063, 1064-1065, 1066-1067, 1068-1069, 1070-1071, 1072-1073, 1074-1075, 1076-1077, 1078-1079, 1080-1081, 1082-1083, 1084-1085, 1086-1087, 1088-1089, 1090-1091, 1092-1093, 1094-1095, 1096-1097, 1098-1099, 1100-1101, 1102-1103, 1104-1105, 1106-1107, 1108-1109, 1110-1111, 1112-1113, 1114-1115, 1116-1117, 1118-1119, 1120-1121, 1122-1123, 1124-1125, 1126-1127, 1128-1129, 1130-1131, 1132-1133, 1134-1135, 1136-1137, 1138-1139, 1140-1141, 1142-1143, 1144-1145, 1146-1147, 1148-1149, 1150-1151, 1152-1153, 1154-1155, 1156-1157, 1158-1159, 1160-1161, 1162-1163, 1164-1165, 1166-1167, 1168-1169, 1170-1171, 1172-1173, 1174-1175, 1176-1177, 1178-1179, 1180-1181, 1182-1183, 1184-1185, 1186-1187, 1188-1189, 1190-1191, 1192-1193, 1194-1195, 1196-1197, 1198-1199, 1200-1201, 1202-1203, 1204-1205, 1206-1207, 1208-1209, 1210-1211, 1212-1213, 1214-1215, 1216-1217, 1218-1219, 1220-1221, 1222-1223, 1224-1225, 1226-1227, 1228-1229, 1230-1231, 1232-1233, 1234-1235, 1236-1237, 1238-1239, 1240-1241, 1242-1243, 1244-1245, 1246-1247, 1248-1249, 1250-1251, 1252-1253, 1254-1255, 1256-1257, 1258-1259, 1260-1261, 1262-1263, 1264-1265, 1266-1267, 1268-1269, 1270-1271, 1272-1273, 1274-1275, 1276-1277, 1278-1279, 1280-1281, 1282-1283, 1284-1285, 1286-1287, 1288-1289, 1290-1291, 1292-1293, 1294-1295, 1296-1297, 1298-1299, 1300-1301, 1302-1303, 1304-1305, 1306-1307, 1308-1309, 1310-1311, 1312-1313, 1314-1315, 1316-1317, 1318-1319, 1320-1321, 1322-1323, 1324-1325, 1326-1327, 1328-1329, 1330-1331, 1332-1333, 1334-1335, 1336-1337, 1338-1339, 1340-1341, 1342-1343, 1344-1345, 1346-1347, 1348-1349, 1350-1351, 1352-1353, 1354-1355, 1356-1357, 1358-1359, 1360-1361, 1362-1363, 1364-1365, 1366-1367, 1368-1369, 1370-1371, 1372-1373, 1374-1375, 1376-1377, 1378-1379, 1380-1381, 1382-1383, 1384-1385, 1386-1387, 1388-1389, 1390-1391, 1392-1393, 1394-1395, 1396-1397, 1398-1399, 1400-1401, 1402-1403, 1404-1405, 1406-1407, 1408-1409, 1410-1411, 1412-1413, 1414-1415, 1416-1417, 1418-1419, 1420-1421, 1422-1423, 1424-1425, 1426-1427, 1428-1429, 1430-1431, 1432-1433, 1434-1435, 1436-1437, 1438-1439, 1440-1441, 1442-1443, 1444-1445, 1446-1447, 1448-1449, 1450-1451, 1452-1453, 1454-1455, 1456-1457, 1458-1459, 1460-1461, 1462-1463, 1464-1465, 1466-1467, 1468-1469, 1470-1471, 1472-1473, 1474-1475, 1476-

RUGBY UNION: IRELAND FOLLOW BOWRING BY ADOPTING NEW LOOK IN FACE OF DEFEAT

Wales undergo change of heart

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

WORDS such as "hurt, humiliation and anger" were reiterated yesterday when Wales confirmed their XV to play Scotland at Wembley in the third round of the Five Nations Championship on Saturday. Defeat by 34 points against England 11 days ago still sticks in the Welsh craw and is reflected in the degree of change, though not one of the changes in personnel can be described as a newcomer.

The same words were on Brian Ashton's lips when he watched his Ireland team lose by a point to Scotland last month. Now Ashton has gone and his successor, Warren Gatland, has made four changes for the demanding trip on Saturday to Paris, where the Irish have not won since 1972. In particular, Gatland has restored to half back Eric Elwood and Conor McGuinness, two players with whom he is thoroughly familiar, because he has coached them with Connacht.

Rob Henderson, the Wasps centre, who has been out of action much of this year through injury, also returns to the Ireland midfield, while Victor Costello comes in at No 8 for Eric Miller, who is unavailable. The Ireland management will confirm today whether Andy Ward, the uncapped New Zealander, will play on the open-side flank or whether Kieron Dawson remains the No 7 jersey.

"The only way to bounce back is by performing on the pitch and beating Scotland," Kevin Bowring, the Wales coach, said. "We will have to build a win second by second. Our pride has been hurt, but our resolve has been strengthened."

The pain of Welsh failure at Twickenham was confided by Terry Conner, the Welsh Rugby Union director of rugby. He was asked how often he thought about the 60-26 defeat. "Every time I go to bed at night and every time I wake up in the morning," Conner said graphically.

Robert Howley, the Wales captain, described the week after the Twickenham game as the worst in his career, but he admitted that the players had to accept responsibility for



Neil Jenkins, right, who switches to fly half for the match against Scotland, joins the line during training with Wales

improvement. "I felt let down by my own performance," he said. "The other players will know how they felt, but they have a responsibility for their own performance."

It is that responsibility which has been questioned by the Welsh public since February 21, doubts that can only be expunged by a return to winning ways. Bowring has retained a mobile back row, where Kingsley Jones returns as pack leader, and will hope for a better-balanced display from his back division. "Neil Jenkins should provide stability in defence and precision in his passing and kicking game, which was missing against England," Bowring said.

"We need to earn respect on the field and it may take longer than just one game. When you feel so hurt and so angry, especially by com-

ments that seem uninformed, it strengthens your resolve."

Simon Holmes, 30, the Scotland flanker and vice-captain, will miss the match after breaking a finger in training. Eric Peters comes in at No 8 with Adam Rodd, who switched to the open side.

Gatland talked about performance in Limerick yesterday, after naming his Ireland team 24 hours earlier than expected. The former New Zealand hooker does not expect Paris to be an exercise in damage-limitation, though that has invariably been the

case in recent years; he will expect his Connacht half backs to organise a better game than did Brian O'Meara and David Humphreys against Scotland and worries about Henderson's match fitness have had to be laid aside because of Mark McCall's unavailability after bruising ribs in London Irish's cup defeat on Sunday - ironically, against Henderson's colleagues from Wasps.

Miller, the Leicester No 8, has picked up an infection after a prolonged bout of influenza, hence his absence from the back row. That may offer an argument for the retention of flanker of Dawson; he can offer greater experience than Ward, who must otherwise make the leap from Ballinacorney in the third division of Irish club rugby into a completely revamped back row.

WALES AND IRELAND TEAMS

WALES (v Scotland): K A Morgan (Pontypridd); W T Proctor (Llanelli), A G Bateman (Rugby), I S Gable (Swansea), G Thomas (Bridgend), N R Jenkins (Pontypridd), R Howley (Cardiff), A L Jones (Cardiff), G R Jones (Swansea), D Young (Cardiff), M J Vowles (Llanelli), A P Morris (Swansea), K C Appleyard (Swansea), K P Jones (Ebbw Vale), D L Charles (Swansea), R Thomas (Llanelli), L B Davies (Cardiff), A C Thomas (Swansea), P John (Pontypridd), L J Gifford (Cardiff), V S Roy (Pontypridd), L Muecke (Cardiff), J M Humphreys (Cardiff).

IRELAND (v France): C M P O'Shea (London Irish); R M Williams (Swansea), K M Magee (Bristol), R A J Henderson (Wasps), D A Hiddle (Rugby), R P Beckett (Swansea), C D McGuinness (St Mary's College), R Conner (Pontypridd), K G M Wood (Cardiff), P G Williams (Swansea), P S Jones (Swansea), M E O'Kelly (London Irish), O S Gifford (Cardiff), A M O'Connell, V C P Connolly (St Mary's College), R Thomas (Llanelli), D Young (Cardiff), D G Humphreys (London Irish), B T O'Meara (Cardiff), N J Poppard (Newcastle), R P Neill (Cardiff), J M Gifford (Cardiff), C Stephens (Llanelli), J Muecke (Cardiff), C Stephens (Llanelli).

Clubs voice concern over expansion plans

THE National Clubs' Association (NCA) meets this evening to consider its reaction to the proposed restructuring of the leagues. No vote is going to be taken, but the clubs in the Jenson National League want to nullify over contingencies should the change occur, according to Colin Sewell, the NCA secretary. "The general view of clubs is wait and see," he said. As things stand, it would

mean four clubs - probably London Welsh, Worcester, Leeds and Rugby - going into an expanded second division in the Allied Dunbar Premiership. However, the Rugby Football Union (RFU), in the shape of Cliff Brittle, is firmly against any change. He is reported to be studying the agreement between the top clubs and the RFU that gave birth to the English Rugby

Partnership (ERP) to see if he can challenge the ERP's decision to increase the top two divisions to 14 clubs each. Brittle thinks that he has a legal case, in that the original agreement made mention only of 24 clubs. Conversely, the top clubs believe that they have a case on case in law as regards the Premiership, but accept that protection from the first division of the Jenson League may be a sticking point.

When and where will it all end? In tears, judging by the comments of one club chief executive, who admitted at the weekend that, if the leagues do expand, they may be reduced again soon should an accord be reached on an acceptable European competition.

Kevin Yates may yet have his day in the High Court in an attempt to clear his name, but he will not have to turn up at Bath Magistrates' Court again. Roy Edey, 72, a retired solicitor's clerk from Harrow on the Hill, yesterday dropped a private prosecution against Yates because of a lack of evidence. He had brought the action, which contained three charges under the Public Order Act, apparently to allow Yates the opportunity to clear his name. "There is no proof



Yates was guilty," Edey said. "He was tried behind closed doors... he was scapegoated by the RFU to clear the name of rugby." In that case, one wonders why Edey brought the prosecution in the first place.

Just for kicks

Tedley's Bitter is offering someone the chance to win £1 million with one kick during the cup final at Twickenham on May 9. The brewers have launched what they call rugby's biggest promotion, with the winner going for the big prize in front of a crowd of 75,000.

Praise indeed

Jeff Probyn ate your heart out. It is the women's University match on Sunday at Iffley Road, where Oxford will be defending a nine-year unbeaten record. Probyn, the former England prop, may have

made derogatory remarks about females and rugby in his time, but Quentin de Bruyn, a past coach and captain of the men's side, says that "never in my 19 years of involvement in the sport have I ever seen a side train and play with so much heart".

Thomas top

The fly half debate rages on in Wales after the decision to drop Arwel Thomas and switch Neil Jenkins to No 10. Loose Talk is indebted to a source in the Principality who questions the perception of Jenkins as a match-winner. In 23 matches against the "Big Five", Jenkins has been on a winning Wales side only three times and in those matches averaged a mere 6.69 points. It transpires that Thomas is Wales's top try-scoring fly half of all time. He has seven to his name, eclipsing Barry John and Jonathan Davies (5 each), Phil Bennett (4), Cliff Morgan and Jenkins (3 each).

Front runner

And finally... it looks like being third time lucky for Dennis Gethin, who is favourite to be the Welsh Rugby Union's new chief executive. Gethin has twice missed out on the post; on the last occasion to Richard Jasinaki, who resigned last autumn.

MARK SOUSTER

RUGBY LEAGUE

Wigan buyout goes to vote

WHILE Wigan Warriors can look forward to the financial windfall of a Silk Cut Challenge Cup quarter-final at home to St Helens, the holders, on March 15, a more pressing concern is a proposed £2 million buyout of the club by David Whelan, the owner of Wigan Athletic Football Club. Whelan, who requires a 75 per cent vote at an extraordinary general meeting on Saturday to change the articles of association, and allow him a majority stake, is prepared to pay £125 each for 16,000 ordinary shares.

Without the necessary support, Whelan - a former president and sponsor of the rugby league club - has threatened to withdraw his

backing, which would leave Wigan with a potential financial crisis. The deadline for proxy votes is lunchtime tomorrow and Mike Nolan, the Wigan chairman, is stressing the importance of people exercising their rights to ensure that the three-quarters majority is achieved. "It is essential they attend or send their proxy votes back," he said.

In the week that work began on a £30 million, 25,000-seat stadium, which Whelan is building at Robin Park to accommodate the football and rugby league clubs, Wigan were told that their cup-tie would be moved from Saturday week, as originally intend-

ed, to the next day to avoid a clash with Wigan Athletic's home game against Oldham Athletic. The match will still be shown live by the BBC, as will be the tie between Castleford Tigers and Sheffield Eagles on March 14.

Tonny Martyn, the St Helens stand-off half, has been cleared to play against Wigan. The Rugby Football League executive committee found that he did not have a case to answer after studying video evidence of an alleged high tackle on Chris Morley, the Warrington forward.

Robbie McCormack, Wigan's new Australian hooker, will also be fit, despite an injury sustained after he was allegedly gouged in the eye.

Revamping the garden

Home Front in the Garden
BBC2, 8.30pm

The cheery *Home Front* team, including Kevin McCloud and the flame-haired Anne McKeivill, move out of doors. They insist this is not another gardening programme and that their makeovers need no horticultural expertise. To be sure, the show is less about flowers and plants than doing what *Home Front* normally does, getting out the paintbrush (the louder the colours the better) and following the *Blue Peter* principle that you can do wonderful things with old baked bean cans. By these means even the least promising of spaces can be transformed and the demands of television compression mean that it is all done in about 20 minutes. Delighted owners (you never get any other sort on these programmes) survey the results. The first challenge is a garden with a thin strip of lawn and little else.

Modern Times: Agony Aunt
BBC2, 9.00pm

Running an agony column is both a responsibility and a means of providing entertainment for readers. The dichotomy is well illustrated at *The Sun*, Deirdre Sanders and her team deal with up to 1,000 letters a week and worry about giving the right advice to people in obvious trouble. But the paper's assistant editor, admits with a relish "Somebody else's sexual problems are always entertaining. If they are not yours, they are great." The agony body deny that the letters they publish are fabricated and the film features several people who have been grateful for their advice, not least a man serving time in prison. Not all the suits are as serious about the job as Richard and Judy's Denise Robertson, who has been brought close to tears. Karen Krazimovich at *Sly* magazine says it is "the closest you get to being a modern-day nuckster".

Trouble at the Top
BBC2, 9.50pm

The latest in the absorbing series on businesses in border villages. Hull Kingston Rovers rugby league club. The cameras pick up the story at the start of the 1997 season and with the club £1 million in the red it could be the last. Edward Klempka, an administrator who specialises in saving



Edward Klempka (BBC2, 9.50pm)

companies, is the last hope and he has a job on his hands. The team starts well but with no money for new players is soon struggling. The main sponsor pulls out. A London property speculator makes an offer for the club and then pulls out. The obvious solution to an outsider would be a merger with Hull's other rugby league club, though that would outrage both sets of fans. Ashok Prasad's film gathers momentum as the negotiations become ever more tangled and devious and Hull KR looks increasingly to be doomed.

Jazz 606
BBC2, 11.15pm

One of television's very rare excursions into jazz (has it become such a minority art?) takes the form of a six-part series from the 606 Club in Chelsea. The use of an authentic jazz location rather than a studio should do much for atmosphere, while the aim is to offer "music in all the currently fashionable styles. This means that hard-bop, modern, acid and fusion are in and what used to be known as traditional jazz will only appear, if at all, in the weekly archive spot. The poet Lenzy Sissay is our host, introducing the artists and performers; his verse, and each mini emerging talent with established names. Tonight's line-up comprises the Billy Cobham Band with the trumpeter Randy Brecker, the soul singer Tony O'Malley, the Stan Tracey Quintet and the many-faceted Orchestra Mahatma. Peter Waymark.

RADIO CHOICE

In The Name of Security
Radio 4, 7.20pm

I reviewed the first part of this series in the Arts section last week and I felt some confusion between the real voices of people involved and the voices of actors playing those people. That does not apply to this, the second in the series, *The Trials of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg*. Perhaps familiarity with the docu-drama format helps; whatever the reason, this is a clear and highly evocative telling of the story of the Rosenbergs, who went to the electric chair for espionage in 1953. Much of this account tends to back the contention that the Rosenbergs were found guilty on the basis of evidence that was mostly circumstantial. Certainly the frantic anti-communist atmosphere throughout America at the time helped to weigh the case against them.

RADIO 1

6.30am Chris Moyles 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whiley includes 12.30pm Newsbeat 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.50 Dave Pearson includes 4.45 Newsbeat 6.30 The Evening Session 8.30 Chris Moyles 9.40 John Peel 10.30 Mary Anne Hobbs 1.00am Charlie Jordan 4.00 Dave Warren

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 8.30 Ken Bruce 11.30 Anne Robinson 1.30pm Debbie Thompson 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Nick Benaughty 8.00 Ralph McTel 9.00 Rona Ross 9.30 Bill Cotton's Double Bill 10.00 The Steve Wright Picture Show 10.30 Richard Ainsworth 11.45 The Radio 2 Show. See Choice 12.00am Steve Wright 3.00 Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00 Midday with Mike 2.00pm News 4.00 Nationwide 7.00pm News 7.30 Football Night AS Monaco v Manchester United in the first leg of the European Cup quarter-final 10.00 Lorraine 11.00 News Extra 12.00 After Hours 2.00am Up All Night 5.00 Morning Reports

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Jeremy Clark 7.00 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show 10.00 Russ Williams 1.00pm Nick Abbot 4.00 Robin Banks 7.00 (FM) Paul Coyle (AM) Ray Coles 10.00 Cairn Jones 2.00am Richard Porter

TALK RADIO

6.30am Kinky Young with Bill Overton 9.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00 Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Peter Dinkley 7.00 News 8.00 James White 1.00am Ian Collins 5.00 The Early Show

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Stephanie Hughes. Purcell (Incidental music: Aldebaran, (saxophone), Francis (Thorne and Vickers), Shellhorn (Piano Sonata in C sharp minor, Moonlight), Dvořák (Slavonic Dance in C); Benjamin (American Rhapsody); Bach Brandenburg Concerto No 3 in G) 9.00 Masterworks, with Penny Gorn. Mozart (Symphony in G, All's Lambs); Beethoven (Mozart Sonata No 2 in A); Mozart (Un'Aura Amorosa, Così fan tutte); Mozart (Symphony No 6 in F); Weber (Kärntener Walzer)

10.30 Artist of the Week: Richard Hickox. In conversation with John Bate, Hickox talks about the role of a conductor and his work with the City of London Sinfonia, the orchestra he founded in 1971

11.00 Sound Stories: Brian Candless. Donald Macleod celebrates the work of the late-born composer Uli Buechel, the younger sister of Nedra 12.00 Composer of the Week: Concert. Live from the Wigmore Hall, London. Ysaie Quirter, Haydn (String Quartet in G flat, Sunlight); Debussy (String Quartet in G minor)

2.00 Midweek Chatter: Call 0171-765 4308 with your musical requests 4.00 Choral Evensong. Live from Exeter Cathedral. 5.00 In Times. With the announcement of the British Animation Awards, Humphrey Carpenter explores the relationship between music and cartoons, from Tom and Jerry to Wallace and Gromit. Music includes Dukes and Vivid!

6.55am (LW) Shipping Forecast 6.00 News Briefing 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today 8.40 Yesterday in Parliament 8.58 Weather 9.00 News 9.05 Midweek, with the Times columnist Lizzy Purves and guests 10.00 (FM) News: A Good Read. Thomas Stacoffe talks to Toyn Williams and Mavis Nicholson 10.00 (LW) Daily Service 10.15 (LW) On These Days. The Times columnist Matthew Parris investigates the history of

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12.00 News: You and Yours, with John Wiles 12.25pm Visiting Julia. Peter Tinnwood's comedy drama with Keith Barron. Liz Goulding and Shirley Dixon 1.00 The Archers at 1.15 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News: The Case Book of Sherlock Holmes: The last of three classic mysteries by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Starring Clive Merrison as Sherlock Holmes and Michael Williams as Dr Watson (9)

2.45 Pages of Westminster. Seven writers reflect on enduring themes drawn from the story of Chichester. Today's writer is Josephine Hart (27)

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7.30 Performance on 3. Live from Symphony Hall, Birmingham. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Simon Rattle. Young Artists (Symphony No 3); Barbirolli (The Triumph of Time)

8.20 Tippett's Symphonies. The composer David Matthews and the conductor Andrew Davis and David Atherton talk to Michael Bebb about Tippett's symphonic output 8.40 Tippett (Symphony No 4)

9.30 Postscript: Choice Grenfell. Nevaime Uppin records monologues, sketches and songs inspired originally written and performed by Joyce Grenfell. Today's selection includes *Dear Frances*, a song with music composed by Richard Adair (20)

9.45 Sibelius: *Waltzes for Opus 39*. The pianist Graham Johnson performs a selection of songs 10.00 *Encore*. Penny Gore introduces the Schubert Orchestra under Simon Rattle. Young Artists (Symphony No 3); Barbirolli (The Triumph of Time)

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Unadulterated truth proves hard to swallow

Your eyes popped out and your jaw dropped from the very first scene of *The Life and Crimes of William Palmer*, ITV's two-part drama about the seemingly respectable country doctor who became one of Victorian England's most notorious and reviled serial killers. But once you were used to the scary sight of Keith Allen with a full and flourishing head of hair, it all became eerily unengaging.

Allen's Palmer — who specialised in poisoning members of his own family, though he was not too proud to bump off troublesome friends and relations as well — was a practitioner of the Chinese school of murder: you kill one person and half-an-hour later you could simply murder another one. Actors agents must have had a tough time persuading their dubious clients to audition for what turned out to be the genuinely plum role of village undertaker, a man who com-

mands almost as much screen time here as the main characters. Only your milkman makes more regular house calls than the Palmers' undertaker.

As always, Allen is never less than riveting. But the reason he seemed so much more tantalising a baddie in *Martin Chuzzlewit* was that we had Dickens's invisible hand twisting the plot into delicious and devilish shapes. It might well be true that Palmer was one of the first serial killers to become really famous, and that 30,000 people turned up for his hanging. And maybe that was enough to persuade Glenn Chandler, who also created *Taggart*, that Palmer's story was, as he describes it, "bizarre enough already; and I think with a true story you're under an obligation to stick to the truth."

Is he right? The showbiz success of *Des O'Connor* is pretty bizarre, but would that make a biopic of

Des fascinating? The sinking of the *Titanic* was a dramatic enough story as it was, but would James Cameron's film have been so successful at the box office without the artifice of a love story interwoven into the narrative to focus the audience's eye (even if it did make many of them squint)?

Not in Palmer's motivation explored much. Then again, maybe it was country life that drove him to it. Living in the country seems to unhinge people, as Dylan Moran keeps discovering in Simon Nye's *How Do You Want Me?* (BBC2). Last night, as well as failing an attempt by his new father-in-law (Frank Finlay) as a sort of human Mount Everest to bribe him to divorce his wife, Moran crossed the path of Mr Norriswood (Clive Merrison), the village-school headmaster who takes a dim view of Moran's chaotic attempt to take the annual

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

school photo. Paradoxically, Norriswood (a traditional sitcom role — larger than life, more exaggerated and unpredictable in his reactions than human beings who are not actually care-in-the-community patients) served as the pinch of salt that brings out the flavour in a dish. He highlighted just how far from a trad sitcom *How Do You Want Me?* is. For a start, nobody apart from

Moran says anything very funny. It seems an unlikely recipe for sitcom success, but then, *The Larry Sanders Show* has been keeping us amused spectacularly well on a jokeless night. Actually, *Larry Sanders* is even more daring: not only has it actually removed the gag-after-gag safety net from under the nightgown, it has actually removed the tightrope by pretty much dispensing with plots. It somehow just levitates, breathtakingly.

Also swimming against the tide was *Cutting Edger's Holding The Baby*, on Channel 4. Watching this tale of British nannies who had spent a year in America looking after a collection of neurotic, often hysterical individuals (and, of course, their babies) produced a strange sensation. It was a sensation which reminded me of that scene in Steve Martin's *LA Story* where he complains to a new young girlfriend that her breasts feel a little peculiar. "Yeah, Tim

sorry," she apologises. "That's because they're real."

Similarly, we viewers have grown so used to "docu-soaps" that we might have expected that given such promising subject matter as a bunch of raw teenage girls, oscillating between triumph and tears — the makers of this documentary would have succumbed to the temptation to just follow the novice nannies, fly-on-the-wall fashion, as they did the school run, moaned about their employees, and wept into their pillows.

But Belinda Giles and Ann Hawker have followed the old-fashioned, sitcom-free route of documentary-making, to produce a funny, moving and unsentimental portrait of cracked dreams and broken promises. As their three-day induction course in New Jersey, on arrival in America, the girls are warned by the agency which brokered their new jobs that

they will all experience problems over the coming year. And they do. Funny that, because you would think that after three days in New Jersey, nothing in life would ever seem quite so grim again.

Nothing is ever grim for Murray Walker, the Formula One commentator who hasn't yet grasped the concept of the microphone. "He's still mentally the enthusiast he might have been in his teens," Jackie Stewart told us on the Murray Walker Story (ITV). Remember that phrase if you ever need a euphemism for "He suffers from arrested development."

Murray certainly does get overexcited. You imagine he even gets overexcited when collecting his dry-cleaning from Skerchley's. "I can't believe it! Will you just look at the really quite amazing crease on those trousers! I haven't seen a crease like that since I took a suit in to a dry-cleaner's in Monaco in 1987! Just incredible!"

BBC1

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (57549)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (150339)
- 9.00am Style Challenge (584641)
- 9.25am Change That In Glasgow (5846148)
- 9.50am Kinky (13393810)
- 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (17528407)
- 10.55am The Really Useful Show (1193029)
- 11.35am Real Rooms (1421549)
- 12.00am News (18854549)
- 12.05pm Call My Bluff (5405704)
- 12.35pm Wheelout (2347988)
- 1.00pm News (1) and weather (53926)
- 1.30pm Regional News (1) (54027988)
- 1.40pm The Weather Show (56484847)
- 1.45pm Neighbours (1) (72350758)
- 2.10pm Ironside (1) (9347177)
- 3.00pm Lion Country (5084)
- 3.30pm Playdays (7334520) 3.50pm ChuckleVision (7334534) 4.10pm Get Your Own Show (1219926) 4.35pm The Wild House (5176907) 5.00pm Newsround (1) (9494346) 5.10pm Blue Peter (1) (3118177)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (1) (178810)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (1) and weather (471)
- 6.30pm Regional News (723)
- 7.00pm Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook Chels Brian Turner and Antony Worrall Thompson are challenged by Richard Whitley and Samantha Janus (17075)
- 7.30pm Tomorrow's World Anya Simons unveils a new radio-wave treatment for insomnia. Plus, details of how to take part in the "Mega" (17075)
- 8.00pm Doctor's Orders GP Paul Slade challenges a patient to lose weight ready for an operation. How Thomas meets some unusual casualties on the cottage hospital nightshift (17075)
- 8.30pm Points of View (1) (138569)
- 8.45pm The National Lottery Draw With Kylie Minogue and Carol Smilie (1) (111891)
- 9.00pm News (1) and weather (5452)
- 9.30pm The Thin Blue Line The officers have a brush with fame as a BBC TV crew arrive in Gasforth (1) (1) (50988) WALES: 9.30pm Wales Opera Factory (50988) 10.30pm The X-Files (505449) 11.15pm The Simpsons (823297) 12.25pm FILM: Rollercoaster (56488650) 2.30pm News headlines and weather (505227) 2.35pm BBC News 24
- 9.59pm National Lottery Update (1) (216471)
- 10.00pm The X-Files: Gethsemane Chillingar final episode of the current series, starring Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny (1) (100539)
- 10.45pm The Mission: Blow Up Demolition experts prepare to bring down a skyscraper in central Pittsburgh, without damaging the historic stained glass windows of a neighbouring church (1) (805487)
- 11.35pm Rollercoaster (1977) Action thriller in which safety inspector George Segal battles highly skilled saboteur Timothy Bottoms. Directed by James Goldstone (1) (801148)
- 1.30am Newsnight (2041679)
- 1.35pm BBC News 24

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BBC2

- 6.10am The Emergence of Greek Mathematics (3067162) 6.35pm The Location Problem (1953365)
- 7.00pm See Hear News (1) (738326)
- 7.15pm Teletubbies (1) (5393317) 7.40pm The Wacky Races (1) (5981891) 8.00pm Record Breakers Gold (1) (1) (32094) 8.30pm Postman Pat (1) (6750297) 8.45pm The Record (532997) 9.10pm Show Choir (7655094) 9.30pm Job Bank (1080694) 9.45pm Words and Pictures (9103549) 10.00pm Teletubbies (1) (1907) 10.30pm Numberline (7244051) 10.45pm Cats' Eyes (2294558) 11.00pm Around Scotland (7512346) 11.20pm Geography (1) (5981182) 11.40pm Working It Out (4274487) 11.55pm Hands Up! (5663146) 12.10pm Science in Action (1) (2421433)
- 12.30pm Working Lunch (61094) 1.00pm Dilly the Dinosaur (1) (24070487) 1.05pm Bananaman (1) (2407958) 1.10pm The Leisure Hour (7801075) 2.10pm Going, Going, Gone (2224100) 2.40pm News (1) (1) (53143) 2.45pm Westminster (1) 3.55pm News (1) (188610)
- 4.00pm Through the Keyhole (1) (1) (4278487) 4.25pm Ready, Steady, Cook (1) (473346) 4.55pm Today's Why divorce? (1) (6273568) 5.30pm Today's The Day (100)
- 6.00pm Star Trek: The Next Generation (1) (1) (427855)
- 6.45pm Sisters (1) (1) (717075)
- 7.30pm Pound for Pound The financial magazine looks at the benefits and pitfalls of building your own home; and property as an investment (549)
- 8.00pm University Challenge Nottingham University v Jesus College, Cambridge (1) (4365)
- 8.30pm Home Front In the Garden New series with Kevin McClelland and his team (6100)
- 9.00pm Modern Times: Agony Aunt's Agony Aunt business (1) (114471)
- 9.30pm Trouble at the Top: Rovers Return Attempts to rescue Hull Kingston Rovers rugby league club. (1) (56452)
- 10.30pm Newsnight (1) (891891)

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HTV

- 6.00am GMTV (4036004)
- 9.25pm Supermarket Sweep (1) (1) (384988)
- 9.55pm Regional News (1) (526591)
- 10.00pm The Time, The Place (1) (74153)
- 10.30pm This Morning (1) (41994758)
- 12.20pm Regional News (1) (5843433)
- 12.30pm News (1) and weather (2366013)
- 12.55pm Shortland Street (2341704) 1.25pm News (1) (474797279) 1.50pm Crossroads (7233391) 2.50pm Chief School (3931433) 2.55pm Vanessa: Too Old To Be A Mum (1) (604393)
- 3.20pm News (1) (1972094)
- 3.25pm Regional News (1) (1971365)
- 3.30pm Tots TV (637033) 3.40pm The Blobs (6620461) 3.50pm Kipper (1) (1076725) 4.00pm Oscar and Friends (532159) 4.05pm The Wombles (1542907) 4.20pm Wool (1) (1202278) 4.45pm How Goes 2 (1) (5263487)
- 5.10pm WALES: Monopoli (1) (213226)
- 5.10pm Highway to Heaven (2) (213226)
- 5.40pm News (1) and weather (31852)
- 6.00pm Home and Away (1) (470181)
- 6.25pm Regional Weather (55079)
- 6.30pm Regional News (1) (591)
- 7.00pm Emmerdale Paddy Clancy is a shocking secret about Bill and Kay (1) (5471)

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CENTRAL

- As HTV West except:
- 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (2341704)
- 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (213226)
- 6.25-7.00pm Central News (568075)
- 12.40pm Film: I'm Dangerous Tonight (1980). A thriller starring Anthony Perkins, Madeline Amick and Daisy Hall. A real ancient Aztec ceremonial cloak confers evil powers on those who come into contact with it. Directed by Tobe Hooper (6043)
- 2.25pm The Big Match: Champions League. Full coverage of Bayern Munich v Borussia Dortmund (495921)
- 4.10pm Cybernet (8067495)
- 4.45pm Central Jobfinder '98 (6000307)
- 5.20pm Asian Eye (1166972)
- As HTV West except:
- 12.20pm-12.30pm Illuminations (5843433)
- 12.55pm Home and Away (2341704)
- 1.25-1.50pm Emmerdale (474797279)
- 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (213226)
- 6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (73833)
- As HTV West except:
- 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (213226)
- 6.00pm Meridian Tonight (53)
- 6.30-7.00pm Streetwise (591)
- 5.00pm Prescreen (97495)
- As HTV West except:
- 12.19pm Anglia Air Watch (862558)
- 12.55-1.25pm Surprise Chats (2341704)
- 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (213226)
- 6.25pm Anglia Weather (803535)
- 6.35-7.00pm Anglia News (68075)
- 10.44pm Anglia Air Watch (860568)
- Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (46487)
- 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (43549)
- 9.00pm Yagobion (245278)
- 11.30pm Powerhouse (5655)
- 12.00pm Ricki Lake (37549)
- 12.30pm Sesame Street (56162)
- 1.00pm Slot Meltdown (47227907)
- 1.15pm Spidey (47215162)
- 1.30pm Laws of Moral Danger (54034278)
- 1.45pm Film: The Wrong Arm of the Law (13056617)
- 3.30pm Collectors' Lot (237)
- 4.00pm Fifteen-to-One (704)
- 4.30pm Countdown (568)
- 5.00pm Pump (915810)
- 5.15pm Piff (949891)
- 5.30pm Shop Till You Drop (568)
- 6.00pm Newsnight (825617)
- 6.10pm Heno (505487)
- 7.00pm Paboty Cwm (314471)
- 7.25pm Piff (949891)
- 8.00pm Piff (949891)
- 8.30pm Newsnight (8568)
- 9.00pm Cutting Edge (4075)
- 10.00pm Brookside (565471)
- 10.35pm E4 (43181)
- 11.30pm Frasier (56177)
- 12.00pm Under the Moon (6275834)
- 4.30pm British Athletics (18476)
- 5.00-5.30pm Screaming Reels (56037)

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CHANNEL 4

- 6.00am Sesame Street (1) (46487) 7.00pm The Big Breakfast (43549)
- 9.00pm Schools: The Enterprise Zone (40013)
- 9.30pm Good Health Guide (1) (618182)
- 9.45pm Book Box (1) (618187) 10.00pm Stage Two Salience (1) (618187) 10.15pm Film: The Last Days of Disco (1) (618187) 10.30pm The French Press (1) (618187) 10.50pm Stop, Look, Listen (1) (2285469) 11.00pm First Edition (1) (975742) 11.15pm The Mix (1) (965365)
- 11.30pm Powerhouse Political megadose (5655)
- 12.00pm Sesame Street (37549) 12.30pm Light Lunch with Sir Ian McKellen and Amanda Donohoe (1) (54346) 1.30pm The Heart is Highland: Scotland's scenery (72275013)
- 1.55pm Pickup on South Street (1963, b/w) Richard Widmark stars as a pickpocket who unwittingly becomes involved in a Cold War plot. Directed by Samuel Fuller (1) (14850471)
- 3.30pm Collectors' Lot. Modern first editions: Victorian gentlemen's editions; Roberts' radio and Dutch interiors (1) (297)
- 4.00pm Fifteen-to-One (1) (704) 4.30pm Countdown (1) (618348) 4.55pm Ricki Lake: Living on state benefits (1) (626658) 5.00pm Ricki Lake: A baby's lights for survival after being washed up on the northeast coast (1) (568)
- 6.00pm Party of Five Charlie decides the time has come to tell his family that he has cancer (1) (403075)
- 6.30pm Fresh Pop (149094)
- 7.00pm Channel 4 News (1) (85546)
- 7.35pm LIPPop Macri post Jillian Tupper (1) (455452)
- 8.00pm Brookside How will Eleanor react to Louise's opinions on Marcus? Mick learns the cost of Leo's extra tuition (1) (455)
- 8.30pm Drawers A celebration on a Scottish estate and the West Essex Gourmet Club's 25th anniversary dinner (1) (8568)

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CHANNEL 5

- 6.00am-5.59pm News Early (5516100)
- 7.00pm WorldWide: Home Ground Architecture through the ages (1710) (1) (5793394)
- 7.30pm WorldWide: (5550181) 7.35pm Windies' House (1) (4037364) 8.00pm Havalozzo (1) (1779988) 8.30pm Disappeared Farm (1) (1874487)
- 9.00pm Espresso (5192723) 10.00pm Secret Lives (1) (1) (3827932) 10.30pm Sunset Beach (1) (5883639) 11.10pm Looza (2979907)
- 12.00pm News (1) (1772075) 12.30pm Family Affairs (1) (1) (5883723) 1.00pm The Bold and the Beautiful (1) (5788855) 1.30pm Sons and Daughters (532094) 2.00pm Beauty and the Beast (2477461) 3.00pm 100 Per Cent Gold (9493618)
- 3.30pm The Patricia Neal Story: An Act of Love (1961) The true story of the Oscar-winning actress's recovery from a series of strokes. Glenda Jackson plays the role with Dirk Bogarde as her husband. David Dahl. Directed by Anthony Harvey and Anthony Page (2624471)
- 5.25pm Russell Grant's Postcards Lake Windermere (37765100)
- 5.30pm The Great Garden Game (1) (1) (778487)
- 6.00pm 100 Per Cent (7815100)
- 6.30pm Family Affairs Roy feels rejected by Pete's business plan (1) (7806432)
- 7.00pm News (1) (3922659)
- 7.30pm Secret Lives Wildlife documentary (1) (782636)
- 8.00pm The Pearly Chair presented by Eddy Temple-Morris and Rhona Mitra (8043177)

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For further listings see Saturday's Vision

SKY 1

- 7.00pm Street Strains (74433) 7.30pm Bump in the Night (763394) 7.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 8.00pm Another World (543521) 8.10pm The X-Files (505449) 8.30pm The Simpsons (50259) 8.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 9.00pm The Simpsons (50259) 9.15pm The Simpsons (50259) 9.30pm The Simpsons (50259) 9.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 10.00pm The Simpsons (50259) 10.15pm The Simpsons (50259) 10.30pm The Simpsons (50259) 10.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 11.00pm The Simpsons (50259) 11.15pm The Simpsons (50259) 11.30pm The Simpsons (50259) 11.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 12.00pm The Simpsons (50259) 12.15pm The Simpsons (50259) 12.30pm The Simpsons (50259) 12.45pm The Simpsons (50259) 1.00am The Simpsons (50259) 1.15am The Simpsons (50259) 1.30am The Simpsons (50259) 1.45am The Simpsons (50259) 2.00am The Simpsons (50259) 2.15am The Simpsons (50259) 2.30am The Simpsons (50259) 2.45am The Simpsons (50259) 3.00am The Simpsons (50259) 3.15am The Simpsons (50259) 3.30am The Simpsons (50259) 3.45am The Simpsons 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MOTOR RACING 38

Villeneuve braced for a return to feudal system

SPORT

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4 1998

RUGBY UNION 42

Wales ring changes as pain of their humiliation lingers

'Potato patch' pitch likely to favour Monaco in first leg of European Cup quarter-final

Doubts surface over United's hopes

FROM OLIVER HOIT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN MONACO

BEFORE lunch, all was gravitas. Alex Ferguson made one of his most stirring calls to arms and Gary Neville, his lieutenant, vowed that he and his team-mates would not rest in their quest for greatness. After lunch, farce made an unscheduled entrance in the shape of the playing surface at the Stade Louis II and, before dusk had fallen on the principality, Manchester United's match with AS Monaco here tonight had been marked down in the annals of European football as "The Battle of the Potato Patch Pitch".

In vain did Jean Tigana, the Monaco coach, protest that the pitch, already a source of curiosity because only eight



AS MONACO (4-3-1-2): F. Barthez — W. Saad, F. Dumas, M. Deshou, P. Leonard — F. de Gooijer, J. Collins, S. Leghvalley — A. Benarbia, — T. Henry, V. Kipriani.

MANCHESTER UNITED (4-4-1-1): P. Schmeichel — G. Neville, H. Bagg, R. Johnson, D. Irwin — D. Beckham, P. Neville, S. Scholes, N. Butt — E. Shearer — A. Cole. Referee: M. Diaz Vega (Spain). TELEVISION: Live coverage ITV (7.30pm).

inches of soil and turf separate the surface from the concrete roof of the car park on which it perches, was not in any worse condition than usual. By then, a Uefa official had permitted an impromptu pitch inspection by the English media, a Monaco representative had admitted that the heavily potholed surface sometimes resembled "un champ de pommes de terre" and the wailing had begun.

That the state of the pitch will exert some influence on the result of the European Cup quarter-final first leg tonight is beyond doubt. The gouges that disfigure it like black wounds, particularly on the flanks, where David



There were lighter moments for Ferguson, the Manchester United manager, yesterday before he realised that his team's chances tonight may have been compromised. Photograph: Marc Aspland

Beckham roams as United break with speed, will inhibit the high intensity of passing that has become the trademark of England's champions at their best. It may push them towards a more pragmatic style of football—longer passes, fewer moves of intricate brilliance. "We cannot expect to have one of our most

creative nights," Ferguson said.

The alarm that greeted Ferguson's concerns about the surface was symptomatic of the tension that is gradually tightening around the team now that the United manager and his players are about to resume their epic hunt for the trophy that consumes them and which holds the power to bestow upon them equality with Busby, Best and Charlton.

It has all gone so well so far. United qualified above Juventus, no less, in the Champions'

League stage of the competition and showed that they had at last grown as accomplished as the Italians. "We have done everything right up to now," Ferguson said. But now that the knockout stage is about to begin, there will be an even greater urgency about the games: less room for error, more distrust of factors such as bad bounces and bobbling balls that could lead to decisive mistakes.

It does not help, either, that Monaco are a better side than many have given them credit for. They may have been more

welcome opponents than Dynamo Kiev or Real Madrid, but, in their playmaker, Ali Benarbia, their sweeper, Franck Dumas, and their forwards, Viktor Ikpeba — the African footballer of the year — and Thierry Henry, the top scorer in the competition, they have players of the highest quality. One advantage for United is that Monaco's leading scorer, David Trezeguet, failed a fitness test on an injured knee and has been ruled out.

Tigana guessed that United were 55-45 favourites to win

the tie, but when someone asked him how he raised his opponents' chances of winning the cup, he revealed a different agenda. "I will tell you after the two matches," he said, "if United are still in the competition."

Amid all the distractions, though, including deepening worries about hordes of United supporters travelling here without tickets, Ferguson remained resolute and focused. He ridiculed as "a lot of nonsense" some of the extravagant praise United have been given by their opponents and

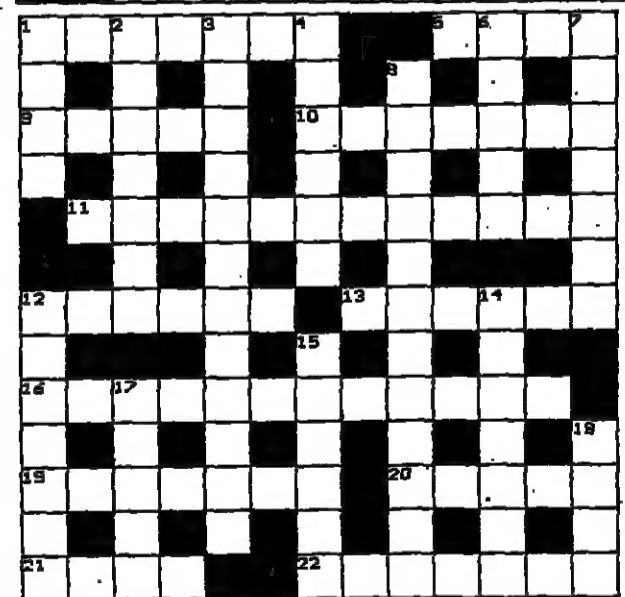
promised that his players had not been fooled. Then he outlined the task that lay ahead for his team — likely to be the same XI that finished the 1-0 win over Chelsea on Saturday — in front of a capacity 15,000 crowd.

"It will be a very difficult match," Ferguson said. "Monaco do not try to complicate the way they play. They are straightforward and effective, they all defend very well and the pitch suits that. It is a test of technique and a test of courage, but it is a test of courage more than anything to play

the way we want to play. We will do our best to conform to that."

When Neville spoke, there seemed little doubt that United would not be found wanting. "The European games are special to us," he said, "because of the standard we want to set ourselves to become a great side, and for people to look upon us as a great side. All the great teams in the past have won the European Cup and we know that until we win this trophy we will not be looked upon in the same light."

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1344

ACROSS

- 1 Joshua's wall-tumbling battle (7)
- 5 Burglar's haul (4)
- 9 Bog (5)
- 10 Iran capital (7)
- 11 Meteor (5,4)
- 12 Recent up-to-date (6)
- 13 Lament (6)
- 16 An added difficulty (12)
- 19 Supply to free (7)
- 20 Run off to marry (5)
- 21 Dark gloom (4)
- 22 Piece of furniture: lady's maid? (7)

DOWN

- 1 Proper: only (4)
- 2 Attained (7)
- 3 Self-interested affection (8,4)
- 4 Set of clothes (6)
- 6 Bottom of the class (5)
- 7 An officer; not particular (7)
- 8 Sentry's challenge (3,4,5)
- 12 John —, road-surface inventor (7)
- 14 In mood for love (7)
- 15 Frightened (6)
- 17 Tooth: per unit of substance (5)
- 18 Look at: noble (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1343

ACROSS: 1 Goodwill 5 Peal 9 Beside oneself 10 Otto 11 Antonio 13 Invoice 15 Svelte 18 Thready 20 Rick 23 Spitting image 24 Eros 25 Clansman
DOWN: 1 Gibe 2 Onset 3 Wedlock 4 Loofah 6 Eternal 7 Left-over 8 Melt 12 Distaste 14 Vertigo 16 Version 17 Hymnal 19 Anti 21 Chasm 22 Rein

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Newcastle paper over the cracks

By MATT DICKINSON

NEWCASTLE United were involved in an unconvincing cover-up yesterday, from the baseball cap that Keith Gillespie wore over his reportedly gashed head as he flew home early from the team's trip to Dublin to the denials that Alan Shearer had struck his team-mate to the floor on a drunken night in the Irish capital.

A tale of high jinks gone wrong appears to be Newcastle's best attempt at an explanation for the incident on Sunday evening that left Gillespie, the club's Northern Ireland winger, in hospital suffering from concussion after he had struck his head against a kerb outside the Cafe En Seine nightclub.

Gillespie flew back to the North East alone yesterday morning from the trip that was intended to bond the struggling Newcastle team together in the build-up

to the FA Cup sixth-round tie against Barnsley at the weekend. He declined to comment on the cause of his injuries, leaving his agent, Ian Elliott, to say: "It was horseplay, nothing more. There was some fooling about and it went a bit wrong. That's all."

Meanwhile, the rest of the Newcastle party stayed in Ireland to play golf and are due to arrive back in England today, when they will no doubt be given a frosty reception by Kenny Dalglish, the manager, who was not on the rest and recuperation exercise.

Dalglish is expected to demand explanations from Shearer and Gillespie and the pair could be fined if their behaviour is deemed unacceptable. Asked if Gilles-

pie's injuries had been sustained in a fight, Shearer would only say yesterday: "It was not like that. Dalglish will want a more detailed report of how one of his most important players had to fly home early after an evening in hospital."

Claus Thomsen, the Everton midfielder, is expected to join AB Copenhagen today in a deal worth £500,000. Howard Kendall, the Everton manager, said that Thomsen was making the move in an attempt to secure his place in the Denmark team for the World Cup in France this summer.

Kendall said: "His performances for us recently had been much improved, but he is desperate for guaranteed first-team football and Copenhagen can offer him that."

Owners threaten summer tours

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

UNLESS the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and leading English clubs put politics behind them, forget the posturing that has been so apparent this season and find a realistic solution to their common problems, then the scheduled tours to the southern hemisphere this summer by all four home unions will be severely compromised.

Keith Barwell and Nigel Wray, the owners of respectively Northampton and Saracens, met their players yesterday and reflected a unified attitude among all the owner-investor clubs in the first and second divisions of the Allied Dunbar Premiership. They wish to bring to a head the club v country row that has been simmering not just this season but for some seasons past and introduce order where there is now chaos.

Barwell will insist that his most overworked players, such as Tina Rodber, Paul Grayson and Matt Dawson — all of whom will meet RFU

officials at today's England squad training at Bisham Abbey — should rest this summer rather than take part in England's seven-match tour to the southern hemisphere.

Wray has given his players no instructions but will advise them to rest, in order to prepare for an arduous domestic season, followed by World Cup preparations.

There is no doubt that both men, by no means the most hawkish of the owners, believe themselves to have been forced into a corner by the intransigence of the RFU, specifically Cliff Brittle and Fran Cotton, chairman and vice-chairman respectively of the union's management board. They find it insulting that their players — their employees — should be cajoled into toeing the RFU line without consultation.

"We went through what the players are earning and what they are likely to be offered by England," Barwell said. "We

want him to come back to the table and discuss 'operation common sense', which we tried to do months ago."

Barwell has not had the same difficulty with Scotland and Ireland, who consult regularly over their player requirements, but both those countries, and Wales, will suffer if the English owners sustain their approach. Pat Whelan, the Ireland manager, admitted that they could not afford to tour South Africa in June without their England-based players although Terry Cobner, the Welsh Rugby Union director of rugby, said that he could choose players from Welsh clubs alone when they tour South Africa, also in June.

"We have to appreciate that Keith pays our monthly wages and that his contracts give us security," Rodber, the Northampton captain, said. "We as players are not angry, but we are frustrated that these problems have been around for so long and nothing has been done."



Wray: met players

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